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THE

EXILE OF ERIN.

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THE

EXILE OF ERIN,

A NOVEL,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY MRS. PLUNKETT,

LATE MISS GUNNING.

" When the tide of censure runs against any particular character, the generality of mankind are too careless, or too impotent, to withstand the current; and then, without any particular malice in their own natures, are often indolently carried along with others, by tamely falling in with the general stream.

" Strengthen'd by thee, this heart shall cease to melt
" O'er ills that poor humanity must bear;
" Nor friends estranged, or ties dissolved be felt,
" To leave regret, and fruitless anguish there."

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THE

EXILE OF ERIN.

LETTER I.

Mrs. Portland to Lady Avenmore.

Briar Field.

ABOUT a year before my son was born, a man of the name of Jenkins came into the neighbourhood of Briar-field; he offered himself as a tenant to Mr. Portland, and from the decency of

his appearance, and that of his wife, who appeared far superior to the peasants in general, they soon acquired a respectable connection in the line of business they followed, which was that of a shopkeeper in the small village of Briarfield.

He brought with him a beautiful child of about two years old, and his wife appeared likely to increase his domestic cares by the addition of another infant.

Besides his little shop, Jenkins rented a small farm, and was by much the most industrious and active man in his neighbourhood; he introduced a different kind of husbandry from what the natives had been used to, and the produce

produce of his grounds was more in proportion than that of any of the farmers near him. The common Irish, though naturally hospitable and humane to strangers, are wedded to their own customs, and look with a scornful and jealous eye upon any innovation; it was not, therefore, till after some experience both of this man's sense and goodness that his neighbours regarded him as a compatriot and friend, but the kindness of him and his wife to the surrounding poor at length triumphed over prejudice, and he was considered as their umpire on all occasions.

I was so much pleased with the sweetness of manners of his wife, who was an English-woman, and the neatness and

comfort of their humble dwelling, that I placed my Francis with her when only a day old, and most amply did this worthy creature fulfill the confidence I reposed in her. When he became old enough to be removed home, and to be placed under the care of tutors; all the instructions he and Rossanna received were repeated of an evening at the cottage of his nurse, in order to improve the mind of the lovely Emma, who every person believed was the daughter of his foster parents; indeed, from infancy the fond attachment of these children was remarkable; my son never appeared so happy as when at the cottage of Jenkins, who was remarkably fond of him; he was the companion of his pleasures, the promoter of his spirits; they

they used to play at cricket and marbles together, and as he advanced in years, he taught him the use of the broad sword and musket; indeed, to the impressions which this worthy man made on his youthful imagination, is to be ascribed that thirst for glory which now animates his breast; for often have I seen the venerable old man encircling his youthful brows with bays of laurel, at the same time singing martial tunes, which was calculated to inspire him with martial ardour.

I frequently invited the sweet Emma to Briarfield, and she shared with my Rossanna in those instructions more peculiarly calculated for a female. The gratitude of the worthy creatures who

passed for her parents, was without bounds at what they termed my condescension, and from many hints they let drop I at length discovered that she had no other claim on them than humanity, and the love her sweetness had occasioned; indeed, it was impossible to behold her without admiration; like the sensitive plant, she shrunk from misfortune's slightest touch; hilarity of spirits was foreign to her character, yet a soft and tranquil cheerfulness overspread her lovely face, which rendered her a thousand times more interesting than the being who is animated by volatility, and who is constantly producing mirth; acute sensibility dwelt in her bosom, and although a natural constraint had enveloped her in a mantle of coldness, as the

the sweetly blooming violet is sometimes concealed by a covering of snow, yet they both rewarded those who took the trouble to seek them; and at seventeen I think she was the most perfect creature my eyes ever beheld.

As they advanced in life, it was impossible not to observe the partiality of my son towards her, and, indeed, his father began to talk of sending Francis from home, in order to wean him from an attachment it could not be supposed he could encourage.

I had often questioned Jenkins and his wife respecting this interesting girl, but their answers were always ambiguous and abstruse. One day that Emma was

sharing in the lessons of music I was giving my own girl, Jenkins entered the room, holding a letter in his hand; Emma started up to embrace him she supposed her father; "Retire, my child," said he, "I wish to speak to Mrs. Portland, if she will allow me, quite alone."

She blushed at this seeming repulse of her filial affection, and her gentle heart beat lest she should have offended her father.

The door was no sooner shut than he said she must prepare to quit our humble abode; and you, madam, who have so kindly countenanced the sweet child of our adoption, for nature has given her

her no other ties on our affection, the moment is now arrived when she will be restored to those who gave her being; and in the splendid scenes of life to which she will be transplanted I trust she will lose nothing of the native purity and sweetness which so much distinguishes it. The youthful mind has frequently been compared to a sheet of white paper, which will receive every impression which education thinks fit to give, but that this is an erroneous idea observation and experience have completely proved; how often do we see children brought up under the care of the most judicious parents turn out totally opposite characters when launched upon the theatre of life; and whilst one acts under the influence of probity and princi-

ple, the other shall disgrace the education which has been bestowed upon him, by the practice of every vice. Talents too often are rather an injury than a benefit to their possessor, a sort of *ignis fatuus* which leads the mind astray, and defying the sober dictates of prudence sacrifices principle to sensual delights, yet I trust," continued the good old man, " she will embellish by her virtue the rank in life to which she is so justly entitled, and from which pride and ambition had banished her, till death seized his prey, and left Lord and Lady Stanley at liberty to acknowledge their lovely blooming daughter; they are worthy of the treasure I am about to restore to them, yet I fondly hope one day to see my

my sweet young lady once more amongst us; for surely your son and she are only formed for each other; and how pleasing the reflection, that you and Mr. Portland distinguished her arrayed only in the charms of virtue before the alloy of worldly consideration could debase your motive."

"Ah, my good old friend," said I, "we must now give up all the hopes I had formed for the future happiness of my Francis; there are among the great those so proud of family alliances, that they would sooner behold their children come to an untimely grave than suffer them to see happiness in a connection of choice, and such I fear your patron would consider a union formed with

the family of a private country gentleman ; and reason, that stern but faithful centinel, must exclude from his heart her image ; from absence too I hope much benefit, since it is to love what fasting is to the body, a little may make it more active and brisk, but a long abstinence will destroy nature, so short and seldom separations, may render love more lively and vigorous, but long and frequent must bring a consumption upon it."

He then informed me in a few words, that a private marriage entered into between the present Earl of Stanley and the daughter of a clergyman, who had been his tutor ; and that the vindictive disposition of the late Earl had prevented its ever having been acknowledged

ledged, as it was a step, had it ever come to the knowledge of his father, which would have completely ruined him, his lordship having taken the most solemn oath that no consideration on earth should tempt him to pardon his son, if, in defiance of his absolute prohibition, he formed any engagement with Miss Archer, who, amiable and lovely, had no other portion but her virtue; passion, however, got the better of prudence, and a secret marriage had for sixteen years been kept with so much privacy that no person but the father of the lady, and the good Jenkins and his wife, were acquainted with the fact; these worthy creatures had been brought up at the castle, and from a boy had he shared the childish sports of the earl, whose fos-

ter

ter sister he had married; and when Lady Stanley presented her lord with the little Emma, these excellent, though humble friends, agreed to quit that part of the country in which the family resided, and banish themselves with their infant charge till circumstances should allow them to resign the treasure committed to their care.

I felt deeply for my son, who I well knew had loved the beautiful Emma when her prospects were considered far inferior to his own, yet would his father and myself have gladly received her as our daughter, when a few years had proved the stability of a first affection.

In the course of two hours after Jenkins

kins had made us acquainted with the splendid prospects which were in view for the beloved child of his adoption, a chaise arrived, in which was a decent elderly woman, who was sent to attend Lady Emma Stanley to the arms of her parents. The parting was melancholy—the grateful girl wept on our necks, and vowed never to forget the early friends of her youth.

The good old man embraced her with the affection of a father. "You are going," said he, "to launch into a world to which you are a stranger, may the all gracious Providence continue its protection to my more than child, and may the lessons of probity and honour which you have received under my humble roof

roof, guide and direct your conduct in a more exalted, but, perhaps, less happy state." He could no more, his sighs now stopped his utterance, and he fell on the neck of the sobbing girl.

My son was gone out on a hunting party, a few miles distant, from which I did not expect him to return for a day or two. I rejoiced at his absence, as I well knew, from his acute sensibility, how much he would be affected at the separation from his beloved Emma.

I broke it to him as gently as possible, yet with all my precaution I saw the effect it had on his mind; on telling him the change which had taken place during his absence, his cheeks became tinged with

with a deeper colour, his eyes glistened, he rushed into my arms, and burst into tears, which flowed the more abundantly on account of their being long suppressed.

"What is the matter with you, my son?" I exclaimed, "what distresses you in this manner?—speak—conceal nothing from me; I never saw you so violently agitated before."

"Oh, my mother!—my dear mother!" replied he, in a tone that emotion rendered almost unintelligible, "I am unhappy, very unhappy! indeed my peace of mind is gone I fear for ever; I am weak and deserve your pity, and am in need of your advice; my heart was always

always open to your observation, but, alas!" continued he, with a deep sigh, "its most momentous concerns escaped your notice—I love, I adore the sweet Emma with a passion that has long lain dormant in my bosom; she is the first girl that ever fixed my attention—the first that ever moved my heart; the syren voice of hope flattered me that my tender, my indulgent parents, would sanction my passion, and give her to me, rich only in innocence and virtue, but now her rank, her engagements, her duty will forbid her bestowing one thought on me, and not for worlds should my distress plead to her in my favour, nor bribe her to pity me; absence will probably in time soothe my rufled mind, but my chief reliance and

expec-

expectation of comfort depends on your soothing society, my dear mother, and my own endeavours to persuade myself that she will be happy without me, since I have nothing to offer her but a heart that adored her."

I could neither disapprove nor eradicate the pride that was founded on the purity and honor of his heart, I therefore only strove to moderate it, and succeeded in doing so; I bid him look forward with courage towards futurity, and assured him that the first awakening of our feelings often deceives young and unexperienced minds, that believes the happiness of their lives is entirely blasted if circumstances oppose their wishes. Does not experience prove that a first love

love seldom, I may almost say never, makes us happy, for it is only a vapour that infatuates the senses, which do not yet know what they desire, and when it evaporates, oh! what is then able to fill up the blank that we feel within ourselves—we arrive at the goal of our wishes, if we are permitted to do so, with overstrained expectation, and almost always perceive the fallacy of our flattering dreams when we imagine that they are on the very point of changing into reality. It is our lot to practice self-denial, to surprise the sighs of aspiration when they heave our bosom, and to pluck the roses that grow on our path of life, and strew the road that others wander with their leaves.

The

The summer passed over without bringing us an account of Lady Emma, who it appeared had ceased to remember the friends of her childhood. The worthy protector of her infant years had been sent for by the Earl of Stanley soon after he had reclaimed his lovely daughter; and the unpleasant situation of Mr. Portland's affairs now absorbed every consideration but for his preservation; and my beloved son in anxiety for a father's fate appeared to lose every thought connected with self, and it was not till after the afflicting circumstance of Mr. Portland's imprisonment that he had leisure to dwell on the distresses of his own heart.

Every exertion on my part was had recourse

recourse to in order to gain liberty for my husband, whose health I greatly dreaded would fall the sacrifice to a long and rigorous imprisonment, but, alas! without effect, nor would he be permitted to take a trial, a measure he was anxious for, conscious that nothing criminal could be alledged against him; and to my desponding heart it appeared as if he was immured in a living tomb.

I had taken lodgings as near the spot of his confinement as possible; the winter was far advanced, and cheerless and solitary our little groupe had one evening assembled round the fire; Francis to amuse me had taken up a book, whilst my Rossanna was employed at her needle. It was past eleven, when a loud

loud knocking at the street door made every nerve tremble; my heart told me it was my husband, and in a moment we found ourselves in his embrace.

In the utmost agitation he informed us that by a large bribe he had prevailed on one of the men to give him liberty; that the same person had also hired a small fishing vessel, which was to land him at the first port on the french coast, from which he meant to make his passage to America, and that a quarter of an hour was all the time he could spare his weeping family, as should he be taken his life would undoubtedly pay the price of his temerity.

Happy that he was once more free, I for

for a moment forgot that we were so soon to be separated, perhaps, for ever; and in my agony lest he should be pursued and taken, I hurried him from my sight, nor can language express my feelings when assured of his safety; his flight was not discovered till many hours after, and providence was his guide to those tranquil shores from which I yet fondly hope I shall once more see him return, by the lenity of a just and generous government, who cannot fail to conciliate by mercy those whom oppression can never reach.

After my spirits had recovered some degree of composure, I returned to Briarfield in order to settle our deranged affairs; and your friendly invitation to my

my Rosanna, opened my eyes to the advantage it would be to place her under your ladyship's protection, much as the separation cost my heart, whose pride and darling she has ever been, yet of what advantage would so selfish an affection prove to its object, if I could have given up the real interest of my child to the mean gratification of my own wishes for her society.

Briarfield, heretofore the abode of calm content and domestic happiness, was now become the recepticle of sorrow and distress; none but those who have experienced the loss we did can conceive the distressed situation of a family that with its father loses its

prop, the whole of its support. My son, though steady, was too young to be intrusted with the management of our affairs, or I should have determined on accompanying my Rosanna to the kind arms of my earliest friend ; and added to the heart-rending anxiety I suffered for the fate of my wanderer, our malicious neighbours, the Dean of Finland and Lord Hartville, made use of every low and ungenerous artifice to prevent my securing the rents due from the tenantry, by endeavouring to impress on their minds, that the property of Mr. Portland would be made accountable to government, as an act of outlawry was about to be issued against him. This alarmed me for a time, but the kind protection

tection I received from a gentleman, high in office, and whose heart was as liberal as his conduct was upright, soon dispersed my fears on pecuniary matters; and I had the satisfaction of knowing that my children would not have to encounter the cold gripe of poverty, and the slights and mortifications it never fails to bring down on its unfortunate possessors.

What, my dear madam, would have become of me had not kind Providence sent me two such friends as your ladyship and him I have just mentioned? —I should most probably have been ere this the victim of imposition.

Never can I be sufficiently grateful

to this disinterested and noble-minded man, whose conduct has been actuated by benevolence and good-will. Dear Portland, may the horrors of exile be cheered by the conviction that thy sorrowing wife has at least the consolations of friendly sympathy. Endeared to me in the hour of distress far beyond what he ever was when in all the pride of youth and health, I cannot think of our separation without poignant anguish; all remembrance of self is obliterated by the sincere and heart-felt regret which he so deeply feels. Alas! what a length of time must elapse before I may again behold him; and even should that day arrive, may he not, my dear Lady Avenmore, undergo

undergo a total change in his ideas of domestic comfort, his constitution, or his affections? Such are the painful reflections which, in spite of myself, too frequently occupy my imagination, and deepen the gloomy solemnity of every object that surrounds me. You will, perhaps, blame me for viewing continually the dark side of futurity instead of turning my mental eye to the probabilities of hope, but, alas! "Her delusive meteors cease to play;" but I will no longer dwell on this sad subject, it will render me unfit for the necessary exertions I must make.

I have swelled my letter to an enormous size, but I have insensibly been led into a more minute relation than was

probably necessary, the subject, however, will interest your ladyship too much to leave any doubt of your readily pardoning the prolixity of your affectionate

MARY PORTLAND.

LETTER II.

Lord Avenmore to Sir Frederick Darlington.

WHAT a delectable composition was your last letter, my fine fellow! a most admirable thesis undoubtedly for an epistle to a young man like me! pity that such an excellent theoriest should bury his talents in obscurity;

yet seriously, Darlington, I cannot help thinking your present taste a little singular, and am almost inclined to indulge in a hearty fit of laughter when I find you descanting throughout the whole of a folio sheet of paper on the animating pleasures of a country life, and ask myself if such can really be the the sentiments of the gallant gay Lothario—the man who not three years since shone in the first circles of fashion—who drove four in hand through Piccadilly and Pallmall—at four—gave magnificent dinners in Grosvenor-square—at nine, lounged away an hour or two at the Duchess of G——'s assembly—and at four hours after midnight was to be heard of at White's. This is what I call enjoying life; nor can I yet

yet subscribe to the doctrine of vanity of vanities; and till I experience the truth of the assertion, that it is all vexation of spirit, trust me I shall not alter my plans; I have quite enough of rural pleasure here without listening to your enchanting accounts of your leaps over five-barred gates, and the hair-breadth escapes you have in consequence of them; for, believe me, when I assure you that notwithstanding the present dissimilarity of our sentiments, I should be extremely concerned to hear of your losing your life in a fox-chace, which I really believe will one day or other be the case.

Such amusements are not at all to my taste—I prefer a lounge in Bond-Street

to any of your glorious exploits, and the delightful strains of Mara please me much more than would the music of the best-toned pack of hounds that ever unkennelled a fox.

In answer to your question of what I am doing at present, I reply that I am endeavouring to repair a fracture made in my heart by my pretty little Irish rebel, the daughter of poor Portland, of whose errors and misfortunes we have heard so much, for spite of all my follies, Darlington, I have a heart that glows with admiration at the sight of female virtue, however homely the form which it inhabits, but in the bewitching form of Rossanna every charm of mind and person are combined; and, although

I never

I never studied Lavater, I am well convinced I understood her character from the first moment I beheld her countenance; I will not do her the injustice of attempting a description of it, yet, I believe, it constitutes her greatest charm except the mind which irradiates it: I could indeed give you a common-place list of her features, but language would not paint the modest sweetness of her lovely face, yet can I boldly offer myself to this fascinating charmer is the point on which I am at this time debating with my heart, would not the censure at present attached to her father's name be rather a blot in our escutcheon; a debate has ensued for this last ten days between my love and family pride, when this morning meeting

her alone, and won by her fascinating smiles, my heart turned rebel, and I am resolved to break through every barrier that worldly prudence had raised, and ensure my own felicity by making the fortune of the sweet unassuming Rossanna; mine is sufficient to give us every necessary my rank requires, and in placing her in a situation to which she will do honour I shall at once entitle myself to her gratitude and love; and though the political opinions of her father are not what I approve, yet surely there, as well as in religion, every man should be allowed to enjoy his own opinion; and could a change take place in Ireland without the miseries of civil war, it were an event "devoutly to be wished;" but when we reflect on the

horrors

horrors and devastation which it would most probably cause in a beautiful and luxuriant country, and that future generations must owe the blessings of liberty to the loss of thousands of the lives and properties of the present race, to the total ruin of all social and domestic comfort to those who might remain, for where would be found a family who had not to deplore the loss of some beloved relative or friend, whose untimely fate might embitter the remainder of their lives ; even if among the number of those most benefited by the change, perhaps it were better to bear the ills they have, however oppressive they may be, than fly to others which they know not of. My interest must be exerted to recall the father of

my

my intended bride from banishment, and from the strong appeal both the Marquis of Desmond and myself will make to the ministry, I have little doubt but we shall succeed.

I intend to keep my passion secret till we go to town, which we mean to do the beginning of next week, in order to meet Olivia and her lord.

My mother is very partial to my Rossanna, but how she may like to receive her as a daughter I cannot determine, however, I must on this one point decide for myself; she is liberality personnified, and I have little doubt that if left to herself she will not oppose my right of selecting for the partner of my future

future life a lovely amiable girl, who would do honour to a throne; but that troublesome meddling old piece of formality and pride, Lady Mary Colburn, will, I am certain, influence her mind, and as she was the sister of my father, and is possessed of an hundred thousand pounds to leave amongst us, she from our childhood has assumed a right to dictate to my mother on all occasions, and Lady Avenmore is of that gentle description of character which gives way to the overbearing arrogance of temper which marks the character of this detestable old aunt of mine.

Her ladyship and I never agree on any point whatever, for even when a child I had the hardiness to dispute her

her right of government in our family; I care not for her wealth, and would not give up one article of opinion to secure the possession of all her riches.

She is a violent politician, and has ever expressed her astonishment that the Countess of Avenmore should have taken under her protection the daughter of a man she terms a rebel to his king, and has on many occasions taken a malicious pleasure in throwing out hints which could not fail of wounding the sweet object of my unalterable affection, whose mild eye I have seen moistened with tears at the reflections of this iron-hearted piece of antiquity; so that whether it was the interest excited by her situation, or the beauty of Rossanna,

I cannot determine, that first inspired my heart with a tender interest in her fate, which has increased so rapidly that I have not at this moment a wish beyond that of promoting the happiness of this charming girl.

In a few day I shall take my seat in the House of Lords. The patriotic fire within me has lately been kindled by some measures of government, which I long to oppose; I have written three long speeches already on the state of Ireland; I am no contemptible orator, as you well know, when roused by the enthusiastic sense of feeling; and I expect when I rise from my seat to address the noble Lord who spoke last, to have my ears gratified with the animat-

ing

ing cry of "hear him! hear him! hear him!" who knows but I may soon be placed in one of the offices of administration—I may become—indeed what may I not become.

In the meantime, however, I will remain your's, my dear Darlington, with sincerity and affection,

AVENMORE.

LETTER

LETTER III.

The Marchioness of Desmond to Lady Cecilia Darely.

Portland Place, Feb. 12.

WHY is it, dearest Cecilia, that my beloved mother yet secludes herself in the gloomy retirement of Avenmore Castle, when all the pleasures in life are contained in this enchanting London; I absolutely wonder how you can

can support the tedious sameness of a country life, indeed, I do not think I shall ever again be tempted to quit the fascinating scenes of town; one comfort is that all fashionable people I am told remain in it till they are absolutely driven out by heat and dust, when they fly in crowds to some delightful watering place, where every amusement is contrived for the constant entertainment of the gay throng.

My lord is so perfectly good-humoured, and so obedient to my wishes in every respect, that I have only to mention my wishes, and I am sure that were they *even* unreasonable, my influence is so unbounded over him it would not be

in

in his power to deny any request of mine; it is true, when mama first proposed him to me, I was not so much delighted with the fate which awaited me as I should have been, and was silly enough to believe I should prefer a quiet country life to the splendid scenes the world had to lavish on me; and to confess the truth, for the first fortnight after I quitted Avenmore Castle, I was horridly out of spirits; it was so strange to be separated from the dear circle it contained, and to address them at such a distance instead of receiving every instant some new proof of their fond affection, that I sometimes, even at this moment wonder what it was that supported me through our long journey, and gave strength to combat with all the

the softer feelings; to quit a fond mother, the study of whose life has been to make her children happy, and a beloved sister; to leave such dear and tender relatives and accompany a man to whom five months since I was wholly a stranger. I am a wretched reasoner at best, I am therefore at a loss to unravel this mystery—it is true it became my duty to follow my husband, but that a duty so newly entered into should supersede all others is certainly strange; these kind of reflections at first extremely agitated my mind, but since my arrival in town my spirits have been kept in such a continual state of pleasing agitation, that I absolutely had not a moment left for reflection; perhaps those who have been accustomed to the bustles of the

of the world, would laugh at my talking of the agitation of spirits, occasioned by a constant round of dissipation, carried on, indeed, I must say, with the most methodical exactness.

Had you seen the interest the Marquis expressed, that every thing attendant on my presentation at court should be in the most splendid stile possible, you and my dear mother would have trembled least the giddy head of your and her Olivia would be turned by vanity and folly.

I told him smiling, his little wife was unworthy all the pains he took to spoil her, and he replied that notwithstanding my person was faultless, and that he saw

saw nothing but perfection in me, he should be the most unhappy man living if every one who was not like himself blinded by passion, did not pronounce me the most beautiful and the best dressed woman at court.

Is there not a little vanity in my repeating the praises my Lord thus lavishes on me, but he is a man of the world, and I think I can discover he possesses great pride, that he is a slave to fashion, he is ambitious of being a leading man, in short every thing which belongs to him must be admired—his house, his wife, his equapages, each he would wish objects of universal praise, even from those of whose taste and knowledge of life he has not the most exalted idea ; but

but I will do him the justice to say he is to me the most tender and indulgent of husbands; the distinction he pays me intitles him to my gratitude, and has made an impression on my heart: Every female has a little vanity, and it is unlikely a girl of seventeen should be entirely free from it, yet I must enlarge my stock before I can have a proper confidence in the truth of the praises my lord bestows on me.

A very elegant man, one of his particular friends, was introduced to me on my arrival in town; he is a constant visitor at our house, and attends us in all our parties; though only six and twenty he is a colonel in the guards, and being

possessed of a handsome person, and the most insinuating manners, he is a universal favourite, and half the women in town are dying for envy that Colonel Fortescue attaches himself so completely to my parties; he is indeed by far the most agreeable man I know, and my lord rejoices his friend has found the method of rendering himself agreeable to me, and has appointed him to the honour of being my *cicisbeo*, and he has entered on his new appointment with the most assiduous attention.

Till I came to town, I thought no young woman could be so properly attended as by her husband, but how different are the ideas of the world;

woman

a woman who stiles herself fashionable, would not blush at being suspected of a little affair of gallantry, and would be ready to sink with confusion should she receive those *tendres* from a husband in public which when offered by any other man is accepted with pleasure and complacency; whom God has joined let none part asunder, is a part of the ceremony I have so lately passed through, but here it is the business of every one to endeavour to put man and wife asunder, fashion not making it right to appear together. These *etiquettes*, though so absolutely necessary in polite life, are by no means reconcileable to reason or my wishes, but my voice would be too weak to be heard against the general cry, or being

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heard, I should be thought too insignificant to be attended to.

Adieu, my dear Cecilia, next week my mother promises me you will all remove to town ; the delightful intelligence has this moment reached me. I am going to dress for the opera, that is to say to clothe my little body in all the frippery Bond-Street can furnish; I am absolutely ashamed at the immense sums that is squandered on the trumpery which is heaped on me, but my generous lord is so liberal that I have only to select, and price is of no consequence, he is all generosity, indulgence, and passion, but I trust the education I have received will enable me to support my happiness with moderation.

Adieu,

Adieu, my sweet Cecilia, let me in all situations have the prayers of my sister.

OLIVIA DESMOND.

LETTER IV.

Colonel Fortescue to Sir John Meadows.

St. James's-Street.

I Have, my dear Meadows, been lately taken up so much with one of the loveliest women in the universe, I that had not a moment to bestow even on you;—the wife of Lord Desmond is now my polar star; she is not

not what I term a decided beauty, which if you have my taste, you will think rather an advantage than not, as there is generally a formality in great regularity of features, and most times an insipidity; in the lovely Marchioness there are neither; she is in one word, animated nature; her height is proper, and excellently well-proportioned, I might say exquisitely formed; her figure is such that it is impossible to behold and not adore her.

The ruling passion of her lord is to have every thing belonging to him applauded by the world; I think myself pretty well acquainted with the failing and weak points of his character, and you may assure yourself I shall avail

myself of them. I do not want penetration, and doubt not from the free access which I have gained in the family, but I shall soon be master of the ruling passion of her ladyship. She has been brought up in seclusion, under the eye of a watchful mother, who has the most rigid notions of religion, morality, and propriety of conduct, and supposes her little ladyship at seventeen has experience enough to guide herself through the intricate paths of high life, without any other protection than her lord, whose vanity is so gratified by the admiration his choice has gained that he submits with the most blind indulgences to all the whims of his beauteous bride, who conscious of her power, already begins to evince in a thousand little circumstances

stances that she considers her will as absolute in her house as Bonaparte himself in his *self-appointed* dominions.

She is as yet a total stranger to the world; her character is not established, she only knows she is divinely handsome; that secret, I presume, nature has long ago informed her of, and the unbounded admiration of her lord has confirmed it; but all this nonsense will shortly be at an end, and I flatter myself she will soon find the praise of her stupidly indulgent husband amply supplied by the devoirs of your humble servant; repeated flattery, and the most constant and delicate attentions will soon touch her heart, and supplant

Lord Desmond in it; that point once gained, I cannot fail of success.

Whom do you think he in his wisdom has introduced as a chaperon to his innocent young wife?—No other than the famous Lady Berresford. Do not you admire his choice? Oh, she will be a charming associate for her—but I have nothing to say about it, as I think her councils will further my schemes.

What madness! let him take the consequences of his folly, and such clever fellows as you and I the advantage of them. Lady Desmond is at present extremely observant of propriety,

priety, but by degrees, from her decided turn for pleasure, and the natural vanity of youth, with a slight tincture of positiveness which I think I can discern in her disposition, I entertain strong hopes of working myself into her favour, and that accomplished, every thing, as Lord Chesterfield observes, will follow of course.

I shall not let you into the plan of operations I have formed at present, besides, it is impossible till I know more of my ground, to mark out any scheme. Chance often performs that for us which the most judicious reflections cannot bring about, and I have the whole cam-

paign before me. Adieu, dear Meadows.

Your's truly,

FREDERIC FORTESCUE.

LETTER

LETTER V.

Rossanna to her Mother.

IT is not in words, my dearest mother, to express the delight I experienced last night by the unexpected sight of my brother; and the only alloy to the transport my heart felt was the idea that you were left alone in soli-

tude to mourn the separation you endure from my father, without one of your children to soothe your distress, and, if possible, divert your mind from dwelling too much on the past. It was indeed, a delightful surprise you had prepared for your Rossanna; your unusual silence had terrified me—it was a circumstance so unusual, that anxiety the most painful, and a dread amounting almost to a certainty, that I had, perhaps, no longer a parent, took an entire possession of my mind, and I had determined, if not soon relieved from the distress, which, for the last month, preyed on me, to solicit Lady Avenmore to set out for Ireland; this resolution was pervented by the sight of my dearest brother, and thank God he brings

brings the joyful tidings that my father was ten weeks since in health, and enjoying every comfort his situation would admit, and that you, my mother, are at present as tranquil as your absence from him will allow you to be; oh, why may I not be permitted to add, if my presence can do it, to the small share which I fear you possess of tranquillity; you will always claim my most duteous attention, and my highest ambition will ever be to merit the blessing I possess in a mother, who, in my opinion, is an example of all that is excellent in women; may your Rossanna resemble in mind and manners, as much as she is said to do in person, the beloved parent she is now addressing, and surely a more

more distinguished lot she need not wish for.

But will you not think me an untractable girl, when I say I shall find obedience to your wishes a very unpleasant task, if I am to remain long in England while you are exiled from it, though, at the same time you must acknowledge that I give no proof of esteeming you a rigid preceptress when I say there is not any pleasure I would not resign with transport to soothe your distress, and, if possible, divert your mind from dwelling too much on the past.

I know your motives for wishing my stay with the amiable Countess, who kindly appears partially fond of your

your highly honoured daughter, that I may under her protection enjoy the advantages to which young persons are generally attached—advantages it would be more for my happiness to resign if they are to be purchased only by a separation from you; and I am convinced the generous and feeling heart of Lady Avenmore would not accuse mine of ingratitude in wishing to leave her for that beloved parent to whom my first attentions are, and ever will be due; but to your wishes, however repugnant to my inclinations they may be, I promise implicit obedience.

We have been nearly a week in London; the gaieties of which, I confess, I have little relish for. One circumstances,

stance, my dearest mother, I will confide to your heart, which has occasioned me a considerable degree of uneasiness, as I should be the most ungrateful creature breathing not to feel the most lively interest in every circumstance in which the happiness of the amiable family I am with is connected, and I greatly fear the lovely Marchioness of Desmond will occassion many anxious moments to her amiable mother.

Never did I behold so complete a metamorphose as three short months have made in this once interesting young creature;—the modest grace of Lady Olivia Darcy is lost in the commanding air

air of Lady Desmond. The bewitching softness of her mild blue eye is as if by enchantment changed to a stare of confidence; and the melodious sounds of the sweetest voice in nature has given place to the loud exclamations of fashionable manners; in short, had I beheld her ladyship, for the first time, any where but in the drawing-room of her mother, the first evening we arrived in London, I could not have believed she was the gentle, lovely, fascinating, unassuming creature I had formerly known; indeed, her manners are as much changed as her person, and *considerably* have the charms of both been lost since her marriage; indeed, I fear Lady Avenmore already repents her acquiescence to her early union, and finds the scenes of dissipa-

dissipation in which her daughter is now so deeply engaged but a poor equivalent for the calm joys of domestic life.

To what mischiefs, my dearest mother, is a young creature exposed, circumstanced as the marchioness is; surely the most unsafe and critical situation for an innocent inexperienced woman, is to be young, handsome, and married to a man who, like her lord, is so blindly indulgent as to give into all the excesses of fashionable life; while she, from the purity of her own education, is totally unknowing in the ways of men, and consequently can form no idea of the extreme depravity of the hearts of those artful and designing wretches who would make

make a prey of her innocence and inexperience of the world.

May the *innate virtue* of her mind, the *pious education* she has received, be her guide and support through the fiery ordeal; but for her, who is from her splendid situation the object of admiration and envy to so many, to escape with honour and *reputation unsullied*, will be, I fear, a most difficult and arduous task.

We see but little of her, who so lately lived but in the arms of her family; her pursuits and those of her amiable relatives are so different that she cannot spare time from dissipation to dedicate

dedicate even the most trifling attentions to her fond and indulgent mother, who, in silence, already mourns the visible impropriety in the conduct of her beloved Olivia; Ceilia too has in confidence to me, with whom she has no restraint, expressed her sorrow at the great change in her beloved sister; and together we lament the choice of associates she has made.

The first visit she paid in Grosvenor-square, after her mother's arrival, she introduced us to, as her most particular friends, Lady Berresford and Colonel Fortescue; *both* of whom appear ill-suited for the society of Lady Desmond. The colonel is, I hear, a most dissipated young man of fashion, and the lady a person

person who, for many reasons, *is not admitted* into those houses where a selection of society is judged necessary; these persons are the constant companions of her pleasures; and with the *best propensities* in the world we may be led either by the force of example, or real want of judgment, too far in the flowery path of pleasure to return with honour to the bosom of an affectionate family.

The marquis and marchioness dined with us yesterday, and in my life I never saw such unbounded ascendancy as she possesses over her lord; but I greatly fear, by the childish delight which she takes in making every body sensible of her power, she will before it is long lose

that

that which she now appears to think will constitute her felicity; and, however amiable the weakness may be in a husband, must derogate from the dignity of a man when it exceeds a certain point of propriety and stability which ought to characterize the sex; indeed, it would appear as if she wished every person and every thing but herself was to be excluded from his heart, and the sole patent of power in her hands; and in proportion as his endeavours to please abate, her expectations of being adored increase; it is very evident the slightest word of blame from any one, the most remote hint that any thing in her conduct, manners, or even dress, could be altered for the better, would be deemed an unpardonable injury, and a decided

signal

signal for battle and tears. As a proof of my assertions, I will relate a circumstance which occured the other evening. To wear away the languid moments, which decency, rather than inclination, rendered necessary Lady Desmond should pass with her own family, she, on coming into the drawing-room soon after dinner preferred a song on the harp to the instructive conversation of Lady Avenmore, and after a thousand complaints of fatigue from a delightful ball she had been at till nine in the morning, and the great exertions she had made to get up in time to dine with her mother at five; she declared herself unable to speak, but throwing herself on a couch, she drew the harp

towards her, and threw her white arms across the chords; she certainly did not play with her accustomed execution, and when she had finished her song, Lord Desmond said, "My dearest love, I have heard you play better than you have done to-night; your voice is a little affected by your great fatigue."

She replied in a pettish tone, while her colour rose as she spoke, "that the harp was shockingly out of tune."

My lord replied, "he did not perceive it; he thought, on the contrary it appeared in excellent tune."

"I am sorry your lordship thinks so."

"Why

"Why sorry, my sweet love?"

"Because, my lord, I own that I hate to be found fault with, and had rather you had blamed the instrument than myself."

"Found fault with! my sweetest Olivia; surely I did not utter a syllable that could give you cause to think I had done so."

"But you said you had heard me play better, and that certainly implied a censure on my performance; the time was when every thing I did gave you pleasure, but now, alas! I can perceive you are beginning to despise my abilities,

and that is the most mortifying species of blame in the world."

The tears came into her beautiful eyes as she uttered these words.

"My life!" cried the doating husband, "how can you pervert my meaning? for God's sake do not suffer such a trifle to discompose you."

"Nothing is a trifle, my lord, which concerns those I love; indeed, I have a great deal too much sensibility for my own happiness, and cannot observe any decline in your affection without the utmost pain."

The

The tenderest protestations of undiminished and unalterable affection ensued on the part of the marquis, who kissed away the pearly drops which rolled over her vermeil-tinctured cheeks; and after every concession had been made, she suffered herself to be consoled, and, with a languid smile, pardoned him the heinous offence he had been guilty of.

The countenance of my lord, who has not been long enough her husband to cease to be her lover, was again raised from the most terrible despondency to the height of rapture; not the cheering influence of the sun on the statue of Memnon was ever more exhilirating than the signal for peace held so

condescendingly out by the arbitrary marchioness, whose animated countenance now plainly proved how intoxicating it is to human vanity to be possessed of such powers of enchantment over the heart of man.

Lady Avenmore evinced a great degree of uneasiness during this ridiculous scene, but did not utter one word on the subject, though it could be easily perceived she felt for the childish conduct of her spoiled child, whose folly did not end here. It happened to be an opera night; Catalina was to sing; and notwithstanding the great fatigue her ladyship had complained of, which was such as to render her unfit to converse with her own family, she gave orders for her chair to convey her to the Haymarket;

her mother, in the most affectionate manner, urged her to pass a quiet evening with her, which in her present situation, she judged absolutely necessary for her health, and Lord Desmond mildly ventured to second the wishes of maternal anxiety; his doing so, only made her the more positive in her plan, and she insisted on going, as she had promised to meet her dear friend Lady Berresford and Colonel Fortescue at ten o'clock.

"Well, my love," said the indulgent husband, "I will certainly come to conduct you home; but, unluckily, I have an engagement of some consequence to-night which will prevent my attending

you; but, perhaps, your sister and Miss Portland will be of your party."

Lady Avenmore declined for us both; and Lady Desmond replied, "Engaged, my lord; O nonsense, you have no engagements of consequence sufficient to interfere with my wishes; and I know, my dear, you will go to oblige me, for, positively, though I long to go of all things, I will not stir without you."

"My dearest love, since you put it on that footing, I will do any thing you wish."

Olivia cast a triumphant glance at her anxious mother, which said as plainly as words could have done—"You see how

how I rule him." The chair was come, and the marquis in opposition to his own will, led his sovereign lady to it; in short, confidant of her charms, heedless of danger, habituated to think her empire absolute and eternal, she seems to display her power, and delight in the practice of tormenting; and the ingenuity with which she varies her torment are certainly great; in short, she appears as if her pride could not bear the idea of acknowledging that she had been wrong, or, of seeking reconcilement with any person whatever. Most fatally, I fear, will his lordship have to blame himself for thus humouring and spoiling her; no temper can bear it, and he will see, too late, the consequences of his weak indulgence.

Farewell, my mother, dearest, best of parents; that your Rossanna may never forgot the pious instructions she has received is her most constant and ardent prayer.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Francis Portland, Esq. to Captain Glenmorgan.

London, April 2, 1807.

IT is high time, my dear Glenmorgan, to account to you for my long silence, and also for the motives which induced me to leave my mother at a time when the dutiful attentions of her children were so necessary to soothe the

sorrows of her situation; but this tender parent, careless of her own comfort, would not consent that her son should bury in obscurity the few talents he possesses, and devote the days of youth to retirement and indolence. As her partiality to your friend made her suppose that, in time, I may make no despicable figure at the bar, she insisted that I should study at the English bar. I could run any length in praising one so good as is this disinterested woman; but you know all her virtues, and love her like a son.

You have often told me I had some other view for my wish of rising in my profession besides that of not being considered an idle young man, you told me true, I have indeed some other view;

to your heart I confide the wishes of my soul; but how blasted is that view by the situation of my poor father; long has my heart cherished the fondest attachment for the loveliest and best of human beings who once inhabited the mountains my father owned. I was too young to disclose my flame, but I secretly indulged it, from the remote hope of having it one day in my power to offer her my heart without blushing at my inferiority in point of rank; these thoughts—these wishes have supported me through an absence of two years; her loved idea heightened every joy, and softened every care; but I never have given to my family any hint of what I felt on account of the lovely Emma, since I cannot hope the Earl of Stanley

Stanley would give his daughter to one who has now little to offer, since the turn of fortune's wheel is at present so completely against our persecuted family; when I knew her only as the supposed daughter of old Jenkins all the satisfaction I ever expected from fortune was to share it with my love; alas! that long indulged hope is now sunk in despair; Oh! my friend, the stern voice of reason now tells me she is lost to me for ever! yet what right had I to think she might yet be mine, when proudly acknowledged as the daughter of a noble house; introduced to the world, seen, admired, loved, and courted. I knew not how much I loved her till she was suddenly snatched from me by her parents; a few months longer had she

she been left in Ireland, and I might have pleaded some merit with the lovely maid from my long and unremitted attachment, for my passion was interwoven with my existence—with that it grew, and with that only will it expire.

Full of the fond ideas which possessed me of once more beholding her, I with transport acceded to the wishes of my mother, and came to England in the delightful hope of gazing on her, though even at a distance; but, alas! even that indulgence, trifling as it is, must be no longer mine, Glenmorgan; she is now, alas! the wife of Lord Mount Travers, the mother of an infant cherub. You who know the tenderness of my disposition must judge of my feelings, words

words would be too faint a vehicle to express the anguish of my soul; chance made me acquainted with the fatal secret —I slept one night at Worcester, on my road from the head, and it being early when I reached it, and not knowing how to employ myself till dinner, I was lounging at an open window, when a most elegant barouche and four drove into the court-yard, splendidly appointed; curiosity induced me to go nearer to it, when who should I behold descending from the carriage but the lovely being on whom my heart doated; a gentleman, who I for a moment took for her father, was tenderly assisting her to alight; she held in her arms a sweet lovely infant, which she appeared to

treat

treat with all a mother's fondness; two gentlemen stood by me, and I heard one of them say "that is the beautiful Lady Mount Travers; what a fortunate dog his lordship has been to secure so lovely a creature; they have been married some time." My emotions were more violent than you can conceive on receiving this intelligence; I could scarcely support the sight of her happy husband, but my eager eyes were fixed on her beauteous face, ah! how much has two years improved each charm in her lovely person—lovely and charming —but not for me.

She did not observe me, and entered the house while fresh horses were putting to the carriage; that was speedily done, and

and I beheld her again drive from the door without having had resolution enough to approach the loved companion of my infancy. For some hours I was not able to subdue the agonies of my heart; at last my storm of grief and despair a little subsided, and I by degrees became calm and more resigned to my ill-fate; and in future, in the affection of my family I will seek to forget the pangs which an habitual tenderness has brought upon me; while her happines is the wish next my heart, oh! may it be as exalted and permanent as I wish it; but not to tire you longer with the story of my own sorrows, I must now chuse another subject scarcely less interesting to my heart, since I begin to think the happiness of

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a beloved sister is implicated in it; I need not tell you the affectionate patronage she has received from the amiable Countess of Avenmore, whose kindness, indeed, has been almost maternal.

On my arrival at her hospitable mansion I was welcomed as if to a parent's roof, and so pressing an invitation given for my continuance in it during my residence in England, that it was quite impossible I could decline that which was in every point so advantageous to me; and since my having become an inmate here I think my penetration has made a discovery of so flattering a nature to our sweet Rossanna as must be highly gratifying to a brother's heart, proud of the unassuming

ing graces of an only sister; the earl is so pointed in his attentions that no doubt remains of his partiality to my gentle sister, who is too artless to hide the pleasure she receives from being thus distinguished by one of the most amiable young men in England; it is an idea you will, perhaps, accuse me of vanity and presumption for having entertained, even for a moment: No, my friend, his lordship has confided his intention to my bosom, and in a few days means to make his generous intentions known to my sister and his own family, and from neither side, I flatter myself, will the generous Avenmore receive any opposition.

Oh, my dear Glenmorgan, how rapturous

turous will be the feelings of my dear exiled father when he receives the blest intelligence of the splendid alliance which awaits his dârling girl; my gentle suffering mother, with what transport will she too confirm, with a willing consent, the wishes of this noble disinterested young man, who is anxious to complete his destiny with a family who, without having any real guilt attached to it, has been for years past the object of persecution and suspicion. What a prospect now opens on us!—honour, rank, affluence, and, what to the heart of his children is far dearer than all, the restoration of our adored father to his family and the his country, this is the grand point now making with the present administration, by the united interest

terest of Lord Avemore and the Marquis of Desmond, and, from what I can learn from them, they have pledged themselves to procure a free pardon, though it is to kept, for some political reason, at this moment, a profound secret.

This day's post will convey to my dearest mother the first idea of an event so likely to restore us to peace and happiness, and place an adored child in a state of splendour far above any thing she could have hoped for; but, warmly as my heart expands at the idea of the honours which await her, the first, and surely most important in the list of blessings, is the restoration of my beloved

loved parent to the arms of his family, for without that how imperfect would be our enjoyment of every other gift had he been doomed to exile who was the instructor of my infant years, the guide of my unexperienced youth, and the friendly counsellor of my riper age, he whose bright example enforced the precepts of religion and virtue, and taught me to look beyond this narrow sphere for permanent felicity; uncorrupted himself amidst the allurements of splendour and prosperity, his care was early directed to secure my mind from the dangers of being dazzled by their possession, or robbed of its peace by their loss; in thy own native shades didst thou best of fathers shelter us from the

the storm which had wrecked thy hopes; and dedicating every hour to our improvement, hast laid the foundation of that happiness which we are now likely to enjoy long, very long. Dear author of my being, mayst thou be spared to see thy children humble imitators of thy virtues.

Forgive, dear Glenmorgan, this apostrophy to an indulgent parent; to you who know him so well I need not appeal for its justice.

It would be needless to tell you after the proof he is about to give, of the noble generosity of sentiment Lord Avenmore possesses, that his character is open, liberal, candid, and free from every

every shade of prejudice; yet a little anecdote Rossanna mentioned to me before I was made the confidante of his sentiments in her favour, will at once give you an idea of the heart he possesses. My sister, on the day of my introduction to this charming family, with all the energy of youth, was describing the different dispositions of those who compose it, but when she mentioned the earl, the crimson carnation which mounted to her cheek, spoke in silent eloquence how deeply his virtues were impressed on her innocent heart; "Indeed, my dearest brother," cried this partial eulogist, "Lord Avenmore is the most amiable man on earth, so compassionate, so generous to all,

that it is impossible not to venerate the virtues he possesses. One instance," she continued, "out of a thousand acts of benevolence, I have witnessed in him, I must repeat, because it will impress your mind with an idea of the liberality of sentiment he possesses—We were walking one day in the neighbourhood of Avenmore, when we encountered a groupe of wretched looking objects, consisting of a man, woman, and seven children, who were the representatives of wretchedness and famine; the poor man accosted us in a strong Irish brogue, with the well known sound of 'Arrah, my honey, here I am, come now all the way from little Ireland, I and my wife, and all my children, and all my family, besides what I left behind,

hind, on purpose to pick up a little work to pay the rent of my cabin and potatoe garden; and 'tis very hard, your honour, the good English will not let me earn so much as half a thirteener in this honourable place, unless your honour takes compassion on us, and order us a bit of work to keep us from starving in a foreign land." The work people, who were employed on the farm, on this remonstrance of the poor creature, began to abuse him without mercy; bade him go back to his bogs and potatoes, and not come there to rob them of their bread; swearing that if such bog-trotters got employ in the parish, none of them would strike another stroke.

Lord Avenmore, warmed by the inhu-

manity his people had evinced to these unhappy strangers, reprimanded them with asperity, and turning to his steward, who was attending him, he said, "Danvers, I always feel a particular compassion for the lower class of the Irish, who come to this country to seek employment far from their families and homes; it is a sentiment spontaneous to my heart, which reason and experience have strengthened and reduced to principle, since so many look with an envious, or an evil, eye on any little service afforded them; so many forget that even were they born under other skies, they are not less our brethren; that the more they are strangers, the more they are distressed, and their claims on the humanity of their fellow-creatures are consequently so much the

stronger, that we are commanded to consider as neighbours *all* who stand in need of our help, with a promise of reward for so doing, and a threat of punishment if we disobey; for these reasons, as far as possible, I have a particular pleasure in endeavouring to supply this general deficiency of pity, and will at all times protect the industrious stranger, a distance from home; in short, conduct this distressed family to the castle, where they shall be lodged and fed during their stay; and do you provide the man with work, as I know there is a want of labourers; and should any one belonging to me insult the honest creatures, let him be discharged my service; for, however attentive I may be to the cries of distress, I know how to

distinguish them from the clamours of envy and discontent."

Such, my dear Glenmorgan, are the exalted sentiments of him who will shortly become the protector of my sweet sister, and the guardian angel who will restore happiness and honour to an *exiled Father*.

Adieu, my Friend,

Ever your's,

F. PORTLAND.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

Mr. Portland to his Wife.

FIVE long and tedious months, my beloved Mary, have elapsed since my heart was cheered with any intelligence from those most dear to it; how dreary they have passed the sympathetic feelings of your own will best explain, yet have I endeavoured to support my spirits in

this my exile, and admit a gleam of hope that we may once more be re-united to each other.

The mild resignation you have acquired, my best love, and which reconciles you to your present situation, makes you appear doubly amiable, since the changes of fortune cannot rob you of that sweet composure of character which has endeared you to all, but more to him who is more proud of being the object of your affections then he would be at being made the first potentate on earth.

Never, my best beloved, omit an opportunity of writing : it is the only cordial of my soul; every thing you can say,

say, however trifling in itself, if it concerns you and our children, must be highly interesting to me.

When I look at your dear letters, my heart overflows with tenderness at the recollection of the many years that have rapidly glided away when we together cemented the most lively passion, which has been prolonged by your endearing virtues, the remembrance of which the waters of oblivion can never exile from my heart, nor has any lethean stream the power to erase your image from my memory, which delights to dwell on the thousand amiable traits of character you have evinced in every situation you have been called into; and it is this contemplation which alone

enables me to support the loss of your society, since the rapid hours which used to gild my every wish in my still-loved country; surrounded by every endearing connection in life now bring only sorrow and wretchedness from the recollection of our former happiness, which is ever recounting the tranquil joys which have flowed from our kindred natures; how afflicting is it to a bosom which retains the most animated remembrance of those fleeting moments, which, from my own folly, I have lost, perhaps, for ever; tha by it I am deprived of the companion of my youth, the partner of my sorrow, and, above all, the adored mother of my amiable and deserving children.

The fates, which are said to preside over

over our fortunes and lives, seem to have acted in our destination as if prodigally sporting with the feelings of humanity—for are we not placed almost at opposite sides of the globe?—and now that I stand in need of your consolation, I may perhaps, have lost you for ever; yet, no, I must banish that dreadful thought, which would render me miserable indeed; oh, could I behold but one vista through which the rays of hope could shoot her golden beams, I should not indulge this sadness which oppresses my heart; but forgive this melancholy strain, and I will endeavour to give you some account of myself since my last dispatches left Philadelphia; my time has, indeed, been passed in as comfortable a manner as the nature of my situa-

tion would admit; I occupy myself with my farm and garden, which is conducive to my health and pleasure; I enjoy, besides, a continual feast for the imagination, since all about me is new and delightful.

From the various picturesque scenes with which this country abounds, I have derived the most lively amusement, and, perhaps, they have been made more agreeable from my having enjoyed the society of the charming family I described to you in my last letter as the former possessors of my cottage, and who I have prevailed on to continue with me till the season is more advanced, when they propose going to Hamburg, to reside till some steps are taken to enable

enable them to return to England in safety; and in the hours of absence from my family, I have found a great satisfaction from the friendship I have formed with this truly amiable family; their lovely daughter, I have almost flattered myself will one day make part of our family; I cannot account for the idea, which may appear romantic, but it has taken fast hold of my mind, and did you see the lovely girl, whose face diffuses the soft effulgence of an opening rose, when heaven impearls it with the morning dew, you would join your wishes with my own, that she might be the being destined to gain the heart of our beloved Francis, which is, alas! I fear, at present, too much for his peace, engaged

gaged to one whose friends would never give her to the son of an exile, banished from his country and friends. Her person is lovely beyond description, but, above all, what makes her so very interesting is the peculiar elegance of her manners; there is a blandishment which accompanies every word she utters, that goes distinctly to the heart; there is a lustre and benignity in her face, which, in my opinion, would warm into animation the most torpid, and when she moves, the graces seem to direct her every motion, and the radiance of her features express a divinity of soul which makes her altogether the most interesting being, next to my own darling Rossanna, I ever beheld; this lovely creature

creature is not born " to waste her sweetness in the desert air ;" her nominal father, for she is not in reality the daughter of Fitzgerald, has confided to me the history of his life, prior to his entering on his political career, and as it is a singular one, I will give to you in his own words ; by it you will discover that the wife my heart has selected for our son, is intitled to rank and fortune which would do honour to any situation, independant of her own intrinsic worth.

The intimacy we live in induced my friend to disclose the following particulars of his situation, which at our first acquaintance he forebore to mention.

" The

"The early part of my life," said Fitzgerald, "was dedicated to the service of my country, but the regiment at the close of last war was disbanded, and the officers put on half-pay. My father being at that period alive, and having also an elder brother, I had little more then that pittance to subsist on, and as I had from habit, and from the connections I formed, fallen into a way of living far beyond my income; I experienced every pecuniary distress of which a mind attached to integrity is susceptible.

The colonel of the regiment in which I had the honour to serve, was pleased to say my services had merited the thanks and rewards of my country, and that he would

would take every opportunity of recommending me to the notice of his Majesty, and he assured me so gracious a sovereign could not fail to distinguish me according to my talents. Flattered with such expectations I continued to keep up my connections in the first circles of fashion; but after being tantalized by promises for upwards of three years, and after having involved myself in debt to a considerable amount, I experienced, like many others in my situation, the promises of my noble patron were nothing more than the cant of courtly hypocrisy, which gilds the horizon of your hopes like a setting sun, and then leaves you in darkness to lament the loss of its enchanting rays. In this situation, treated with coolness

by

by those whom I had thought my friends, I felt that disgust for the depravity of the human heart which is natural to a mind uncontaminated with servility.

It was under such sensations I sold my half-pay, with a motive to pay my debts, and retire to my own country, where I should endeavour to live with a degree of frugality, and by so doing avoid the contumely of obligation; but, as if through life the destinies had taken cognizance of my actions, I was diverted from that salutary resolution by meeting with Lord Edgemount, who had been my friend and companion at Westminster; he seemed to take the most active interest in my welfare, and insisted I should spend the shooting season at his

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in Norfolk, by which time he assured me something should be accomplished for my benefit, as he had great interest with the ministry then in power. I thanked my noble friend for his promised kindness and hospitable invitation, but I told him I had been so often disappointed, and been on that account so much reduced in my circumstances that I had come to a determination to avoid in future those rocks and quicksands upon which I had been so lately wrecked; and that animated by a love of independence, I could never again consent to fall into that state of uncertainty and suspence which must naturally be the portion of any man who depends on his superiors for preferment.

Lord

Lord Edgemount appeared to admire, what he called, my heroic sentiments and said, that it would be a misfortune the king should lose the use of talents so splendid and appropriate, and if I would trust to him, and rely on his word, he should consider himself bound to secure to me the possession of my most sanguine hopes. Though I had determined not to suffer the allurements of the world any longer to divert my mind, yet there was something too flattering in such apparent disinterested promises for me to be able to withstand them, and whether it was that I found my vanity gratified by his lordship's eulogium upon my abilities or not, I will leave you to determine, but I thought

thought at that moment he was the most graceful orator and the kindest friend I had ever known, and agreed to accompany him the next day to Oakfield Abbey, where I was received in the most obliging and affable manner by the lovely countess, who, though two years a wife at the time I had the happiness of being introduced to her, possessed that radiance of beauty for which she had been famed from her earliest youth; the piercing brightness of her eyes communicated a mild effulgence to her animated features, which bespoke a divinity of soul commanding at once reverence and esteem, whilst the most captivating modesty rendered her the most enchanting female I had ever seen.

I was young, and my heart susceptible of the softest emotions ; it was the season when nature, in all her glory, wore her gayest attire ; when pleasure seemed to be spontaneous, and the elegant circle assembled at Okefield seemed only to exist in a continual round of pleasure and amusement, while the lovely mistress of the splendid mansion, by her sweetness and affability, made each heart her own.

I soon became sensible of my dangerous situation, and struck with horror at the base idea of ingratitude, I determined to fly the fascination of her presence ; and told my friend, after having passed a month at Oakfield, that though

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I considered myself much obliged by the honor of his proffered services, and was highly gratified in the pleasure his society afforded, yet it would be impossible for me to be able to endure a life of much inactivity; and if he would not attribute my leaving him to disrespect, I would prosecute my former resolution, which could, I feared, alone secure me that tranquillity I was so much in need of, and which, I was convinced, could only be procured by a state of active employment.

To my reasoning his lordship answered that he thought I was actuated by the most capricious folly, for that the summer would soon pass over when he should return to town, and then there would

would be no doubt of his obtaining for me every thing which I could expect. In short all my endeavours to get away were ineffectual and I determined to avoid as much as possible the interesting being whom it was not in nature to behold without pity and admiration united, as I could not remain ignorant of the domestic bickerings that constantly agitated her gentle heart; Lord Edgemount was a gay man in the fullest acceptation of the word, and from his want of tender attentions I have frequently observed her bosom palpitating with contending passions, and as often seen the tears of sorrow, like the lustres in heaven, irradiate the divinity of her charms.

But

But as the history of my friend Fitzgerald is long, I will for the present, my best love, conclude this packet, least by encreasing the size I should render its conveyance to the shores of Ireland more difficult; and by the next opportunity I will conclude the eventful little story; till then, and for ever, may the Almighty Disposer of Events take under his divine protection the best and most beloved of wives, and the most dutiful and affectionate of children, that husband and father were ever blessed with, is the most fervent prayer of their attached and affectionate

H. PORTLAND.

LETTER VIII.

Mr. Portland in continuation to his Wife.

SIX weeks ago, my dearest Mary, I sent off my last dispatches, and having an opportunity to send letters by a gentleman going to England, I cannot resist the opportunity of addressing the best beloved of my heart, though

though all I have to say is merely a bill of health and a repitition of that unbounded affection my heart feels for the dear dear inhabitants of Briarfield, who are too well acquainted with the force of nature to need any fresh assurance of the eternal and unbounded sentiments of tenderness they inspire; and as the seclusion in which I now vegetate leaves me few subjects for the pen, I shall therefore resume the interesting little narrative of my friend Fitzgerald, in the hope you may one day become, like myself, personally interested in the tale of its amiable heroine.

My last letter left of, I believe, at a period in which he was describing the inattention of Lord Edgemount to his

amiable countess, and the remainder of the tale shall be given, like the beginning, in the words of the narrator, who, from a reference to the notes I made at the time, continued thus :—

" The scenes of distress, to which I was sometimes witness, were too pathetic for me not to feel the most lively concern for the cause of her inquietude ; and I could not but observe that the air of gaiety which she sometimes put on was entirely forced, and as her chagrin appeared daily to encrease, it was impossible for her any longer to hide from my observation the poignancy of her sorrows.

Beauty is, in my opinion, never so formidable as when unhappy ; it is then every charm receives an additional

lustre from the compassion we cannot avoid feeling for the lovely sufferer; and when the heart is softened to pity the arrows of love are mortal at every shot. Great God how ineffably painful is that scene, when a sensible and beautiful woman, with the most delicate feelings of sensibility and of honor, finds herself injured in the tenderest point, and has no appeal for justice.

Was that exquisite sensibility of feeling given to them that they should be mortified and made miserable? and can folly, arrogance, or the presumptive madness of man conceive that the amiable feelings of a wife and mother could be given them by the Deity to become the sport of unfeeling contumely, and

to fall a victim to matrimonial tyranny? —A virtuous man cannot—or rather does it not prove how much a woman who sustains the arduous character of daughter, wife, and mother, with propriety, is intitled to tenderness, protection, and support; and I pronounce that man unworthy the comforts of domestic happiness who would suffer any consideration under heaven to weigh with him when the feelings of a virtuous and unprotected woman have been violated, and she insulted for having pretensions to a delicacy to which a brute is a stranger.

It was under such ideas that I did not hesitate to say to Lord Edgemount that there appeared to be something in the

the manner of his amiable wife that indicated an uneasiness of mind, and that I hoped it was not of such a nature as to be lasting; I begged that he would forgive me for the interest I had taken in their reciprocal happiness, but that it was impossible to see *any woman*, much less one so every way deserving, apparently unhappy, without endeavouring by my remonstrance to alleviate her distress.

His lordship replied with great coldness, and with a sarcastic air, that it was impossible for some women to be otherwise than unhappy, for they were under the most ungovernable caprices, and that was his wife's misfortune or rather his, and which had him assured

for some time past, that their mutual wretchedness would be the result.

I again ventured to remonstrate, and told him that his lovely wife appeared to every discriminating observer one of the most charming and amiable of women and was astonished if she was really the character he represented her to be, that she could be so complete a counterfeit.

His lordship's answer was that it was the fashion of the times for fine women to have fine feelings; and that it was now looked upon as a peace of brutality for a married man to be every night in a state of intoxication, or to keep a fine girl in a snug lodging, which was at once

once endeavouring to destroy all social pleasures, and rendering a man's life as insipid as the amusements of women; in short, said he, it is a direct attack upon our prerogatives, which if we surrender we should become the most abject and contemptible animals in the creation.

I still attempted to reason with him, but it was all in vain, for he was decided in the opinion that the tranquillity of society depended upon the tyranny which should be continually exercised over them, otherwise a female empire would destroy every thing that was beautiful, and which the talents of ages had accumulated.

To such absurdities, no arguments were of any avail, and I candidly told him I differed so completely from him in my opinions, that it was impossible for me to witness the exercise of such tyranny with indifference, and as it appeared not to be possible for me to afford any relief to either of them, he must forgive me when I told him I should depart the next day, as I could not but reprobate those customs of the world so entirely repugnant to nature, particularly those which so diabolically oppress the weak.

He laughed immoderately at what he termed my knight errantry, and was more strenuous than ever in preventing my departure; however, I had made up my

my mind to go the next morning, and entered the breakfast room with the intention of acknowledging to the lovely mistress of the mansion how much I held myself honoured by her politeness during my residence under her roof, but I was disappointed, as I found my lord at breakfast by himself; I enquired after her ladyship's health, and expressed my alarm at not finding her down; Lord Edgemount said that she was in one of her blessed humours, and as he had become so used to them they had ceased to have any effect upon him, and then added that he was going to have some fish ponds drawn, which would be his amusement for the day, and that he did not doubt but Lady Edgemount would be in a better humour by the evening.

I could not think of leaving Oakfield Abbey without bidding adieu to the interesting being for whose situation my heart bled, and as I thought it was very likely she would be confined the whole day to her apartment, I resolved to defer my departure to the next morning. I however declined his lordship's entreaties to be of his party, alledging I had some letters to write which required my immediate attention.

As soon as he left the room I took up a book, and strolled to a sequestered part of the grounds, in which a hermitage was erected, and where I intended to amuse myself for some hours; on my entering this enchanting little spot I was surprised,

surprised, most agreeably, to find Lady Edgemount there; she appeared quite absorbed, and did not at first take notice of my approach; I stopped for fear of interrupting her, and was about to leave the spot, when in sweetest accents she bid me the usual compliments of the morning; deep sighs had escaped her, and at my approach she had been drying up her tears. I felt every wound in my heart bleed afresh! We fell into an interesting conversation; she seemed for a moment even to forget her misfortunes, but nature will not be repressed, it must have vent, and when the torrent of emotions have been checked they generally accumulate in such force as to overturn the barriers of pride; and it is when the divinity of

the soul floats in tears that it creates a sensibility which, like an electrical shock, rouses into action the most dormant animation; her whole faculties were for a time suspended with the proud idea that her rank and virtue would shield her from the animadversions of an invidious world, and that by concealing her wrongs, the dignity of her name would escape the obliquy of censorious fools, who spend half their lives in disseminating scandal and calumniating their neighbours, which constituting the *primum mobile* of their colloquial vivacity; it is the food of their envy, and the spring of their every felicity. Her labouring emotions at length so agitated her tender bosom, that every returning

turning swell appeared to threaten her with immediate destruction; but when her tears began to flow the inward storm subsided into a serene calm, and her soft azure eye gave a mild radiance to her charms, which was love itself robed in all its celestial splendour—the die was cast, I stood on the banks of the rubicon —I must either have retired like a coward, and have abandoned the empire of the world, or by a stroke of manly courage cross the limits of despotism, and rescue from oppression and tyranny the most lovely creature on earth. Who is so base to say they would have hesitated? What! desert the perfection of beauty in distress, and suffer virtue to mourn without offering it protection? No, by heavens! When a degenerate world

world stands by and beholds every day with indifference their privileges trampled upon, and make sport of the miseries of unfortunate women, who have been driven over the brink of perdition by the cruelty of those who ought to be their protectors, shall no man dare to take their parts? Who is so insensible as to be moderate when reprobating a conduct so infamous and contemptible? No, Portland, I did not hesitate. I fell upon one knee, and seizing her hand at the same time, conjured her, though I had no other claim on her confidence than as a man of honour, that she would tell me if it was in my power to do her any service; and here, said I, let me pledge a friendship as pure as it is ardent, in the presence of that luminary which

which warms into life the whole creation, but which in future will not affect me only as the smiles of happiness resume their empire in your face. Behold in me a brother who would sacrifice his life for your sake. Ten thousand thoughts appeared to rush into her imagination; honour, candour, and pride seemed to contend for dominion, but the innocence of my Mary's heart betrayed the sentiments of her mind, for it is time, my dear friend, you should know that the companion of my banishment, the wife of my bosom, is no other than the once miserable Lady-Edgemount.

But to continue my little history with some degree of method.—She assured me,

me, in broken accents, that all my kindness was unavailing, since her lord had for some time led such habits of life that it would be next to impossible to lay them aside, and it was from their influence that his mind and manners were become so vitiated that nothing short of regeneration would effect a change, and that her fate was wretched without hope of amendment.

"And is it possible," I exclaimed, "that your family can thus tamely suffer your gentle sweetness to become the sacrifice to tyranny and brutality?—Is is possible that they can behold the roses fade upon your cheek, and the spring of youth overcast with the *sombre* reflections of a heart labouring in the elements of

of virtue, pride, and inclination, and not attempt to rescue you from a situation so repugnant to your nature, and so dangerous to your health and constitution!"

"How is it possible," answered she, "for my family, in my present situation, to remove my distresses? I am, alas! bound to my lord by the ties of matrimony, which it is not possible to dissolve; and it is my duty to bear all it pleases God to afflict me with as meekly as possible, since death only can relieve me from the unkindness of him who should be the protector and treasure of my life. But," she added, "she had determined to be as little with his lordship as possible till heaven would change

change his heart, and endeavour to seek in study for that amusement she had been taught to expect from the attentions and conversation of a husband ;" adding, " that when she was married she was so young that it was impossible for her to have an adequate idea of the nature of so solemn an engagement—that her family had made the match ; and, oh !" exclaimed she, " that when they gave him my hand they could have given him my heart likewise, then indeed I had been less miserable, but the match was one of interest, and I was induced to accede to their importunities from considerations of filial tenderness and duty, without the most distant idea of what fatal consequence might flow from such an acquiescense ; he has had

had every chance given him to make me happy, and reform his conduct, but, alas! he has proved by a series of contempt and indifference that no such change was now to be expected, and she could only feel gratitude to me for the warmth with which I entered into her domestic afflictions, which would admit of no alleviation."

In this kind of manner we passed the morning, and at seven met his lordship at the dinner table, where he entertained us with a long account of the amusements he had experienced during the day, and seemed in no way solicitous on the score of his lovely wife, whom he treated as usual with the greatest *sang froid* and indifference; whilst

whilst with volubility he expatiated upon the excellence of his dogs, and the breed of his hunters, the most interesting being in the world was regarded by him as a mere cypher, who added to the most lively sensibility the most brilliant wit and captivating vivacity, had it not been crushed by coldness and neglect, which would have kindled into raptures the admiring senses, for she seemed to breathe sentiment, talked like Minerva, and looked like the queen of beauty, so that my indignation and wonder were at once raised, that the prevalence of habit should thus strike at the root of domestic happiness; and that a man possessed of such a treasure would not feel his pride as well as his affections gratified by

by the brilliance of thought and elegance of expression displayed by his amiable countess; a charm which imperceptibly, (when from the vermil lips of beauty,) gives the most lovely polish to manners, and a zest to the charms of society.

Lady Edgemount retired early, and as my lord had taken his claret pretty freely, he was unable to sit so long as usual, so that I was relieved from that ennui which proceeds from being compelled to attend to the conversation of a person when it is not in the least interesting, and particularly so when the mind is totally absorbed with reflections of the most interesting nature. Heavens!

vens! thought I, to what a state of degradation and misery have the manners of high life and fashionable marriages seduced thousands of amiable and sensible beings.

When I contemplated the graces of spring which yields so many sweets, when impregnated with the fragrance of the riches which fair Flora in all the effulgence of her reign diffuses; when I brought to my imagination the blooming rose sparkling with the morning dew; when I figured to my mind the gay scenes of a luxuriant verdure, which gives enchantment to the mild evenings of the vernal season; when walking with an object lovely and beloved

loved, while together we admired the myriads of orbs that decorate the heavens, and, revolving in perfect harmony, shoot their mild beams, and illumine the vault of the high empyrean regions in their infinite progression; how ineffably beautiful and sublime, said I, are the works and operations of nature; and how preposterous have been those manners which have destroyed the pleasures that flow from the mind at ease, when contemplating the benign goodness of a bountiful Creator; and what a shameful sacrilege have those committed against heaven who have cruelly wantoned with the happiness of an amiable being, and by so doing have destroyed a taste for those exquisite joys which are sponta-

neous: These reflections occurred to me from having just been the spectator of the most animated beauty retiring in sadness through the gloom of night to reprobate that despotism which surrounds her, with all the vanity and elegance nature and art can produce, and then interdicts its appropriation by coldness, indifference, and contempt; how unlike the picture of matrimonial felicity I could have pictured in my own mind, and which has been most fortunately realized since heaven gave to my arms the most amiable and injured of women; in a union with whom I have discovered that a happy marriage has in it all the pleasures of friendship, all the enjoyments of sense and reason, and, indeed, all the sweets of life; and that I am convinced that

that nothing is a greater mark of a vicious and degenerate age than the common ridicule which passes on this state of life; but it is indeed only happy in those who can look down with scorn or neglect on the fashionable impieties of the times, and are content to tread the thorny paths of life together in a constant uniform course of virtue, which will strew the roses of domestic happiness over every situation; and as time, which strengthens friendship, weakens love, man and wife so live together as two friends most cautious of offending each other, that when they grow old their friendship may improve as love declines, and they will find a world in each other, while the harmony which would thus reign between them would make their very foibles shine in

every eye; but love once lost in the wedded state is seldom regained, and the consideration of this fact should plainly point out to man how much beneath his character it is to dissolve in luxury, vice, and folly, which end in the contempt of others, while a life well spent in the active duties of our situation leads to happiness, temperance, and health.

We met as usual at breakfast, after which my lord went out, and observing the countenance of his lovely wife pale and melancholy, I offered to read to her a new novel she had just received from town, while she worked; we passed the morning in reading and conversation; and as her chearfulness by degrees returned, we conversed upon a variety of subjects

subjects without hinting in the most distant way at her unpleasant situation. And never, my dear Portland, was I more charmed, never did a mind discover a more sacred regard for all the principles of honour and humanity, never was there a soul more replete with that celestial fire which glows with purity aud virtue—I was intoxicated with admiration, and in that ethereal element of bliss, which gilds the fleeting moments as they pass, I thought the sun had scarcely passed its meridian when the first bell rang for dinner, so great was my delight in conversing with a female whose mind had not been perverted by the tyranny of custom, which has substituted duplicity for candour, while the crude sentiments of cunning have destroyed that genuine

felicity which flows from the genial current of the unsophisticated heart, and which causes the female frequently to lose in the world that fascinating charm of native simplicity which so peculiarly adorns her character; while they are governed in their amusements by ridiculous forms, and directed by shameful insincerity and subterfuge in their manners and conduct; and while tumultuous pleasures have combined to destroy that lively sensibility, that native modesty which characterizes the innocent heart, indeed, depravity has become so general that it has commonly been mistaken for turpitude, and thus hardened, the mind becomes incapable of receiving that happiness in retirement which flows from innocence, virtue,

virtue, and beauty, and which felicity is heightened with the transporting considerations, that it is not dependent upon the caprice of fortune, or the advantageous aids of art.

You must forgive me, my dear Portland, the frequent digressions I make, but whenever I touch upon a subject which brings to my mind the recollections of the injury received by the most deserving of her sex, resulting from the depravity of the times, I cannot help reprobating a degeneracy so baneful to the happiness we are formed to experience, and lament that it is sometimes in the power of a tyrant to tarnish the immaculate purity of an innocent fe-

male, whose pride and honour it is to value it as inestimable.

The brutish behaviour of such men as Lord Edgemount, who neglect delicate and sensible women, and suffer them to live insulated as it were, while they spend their lives and fortunes amongst the most abandoned of the sex, are the greatest enemies to conjugal bonds, and proves how necessary it is for parents to be particular when they encourage their children to marry men when there is not an affinity of age, disposition, and sentiment between the parties; it is an attention of the highest consequence; and nothing, perhaps, can be more unnatural and wicked then parents suffering the victims of their blind ambition to continue

nue to live with men they have united them to, from such motives, when they cease to treat them with affection and respect; for when paternal despotism has been practised, it is inhuman to suffer a child to fall a victim to its influence. It is in moments of pity for such a woman that the attraction of sympathy, like the magnet that touches certain bodies, draws it by its specific qualities, and holds in bondage as it were by magic, the whole powers of reason."

But the impatience of my Mary for the sequel of the history of my friend must yield to the necessity of the moment; I am just informed if I have dispatches for England, I must immediately conclude them, or lose the conveyance, in

that case my heart tells me that of my adored wife and our beloved children would labour under a state of anxious suspence for the fate of their fond and devoted Portland, who has already been the occasion of so much misery to the beings dearest to him on earth.

Adieu, sole treasure of my life; believe every day increases my anxiety for your happiness.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Mr. Portland to his Wife.

I Have received the thrice welcome packet which contained the blessed assurance, that the Almighty continues to preserve you in health and happiness, and that my darling girl is happy under the honourable protection of your amiable relation, who in her conduct to you has

given a convincing proof, that prosperity is no just scale to weigh friendship, but that adversity is the true balance for a person who only assumes the name of friend, is like the shadow on a dial, it appears in clear weather but vanishes when it is cloudy.

The intelligence you impart to me, that the interest of this noble house may occasion my return to the arms of my family, is a cordial to my soul; but, my love, beware we do not too fondly cherish the delightful idea, for are we not daily convinced by experience that hope is generally a wrong guide, though a pleasant companion? and a ship ought not to be fixed by one anchor, nor the tranquillity of our life be placed on a single hope; it

it is a kind of vital heat in the soul that cheers and gladdens her, when she does not attend to it, it makes pain easy and labour light.

But with the delightful prospect of future felicity before my eyes I will return to the memoirs of my friends, who with his amiable family are returning to England to be the sharers in every happiness this world can afford. I concluded my last with some reflections made after a marriage spent in the refinements of elegant and social converse; and he continued in the following words:—

"On entering the dining room I found with Lord Edgemount two or three *bon vivants*, and I was surprised at the marked

marked coldness of his lordship's manner, who till this moment had ever accosted me in the most polite yet familiar manner. To one of the gentlemen I was a stranger, to whom he introduced me, and then rallied my want of taste in spending my morning with his wife to partaking the sports of the field with himself, relating at the same time some mischievous adventures of his companions which he thought I should have been highly diverted with; he then attempted to be pleasant, and seemed to think I was destitute of that spirit necessary to enjoy such enterprizes; and turning to Lord John Villiers whispered in a voice loud enough to be heard by all present, that I was better qualified to read to Lady Edgemount then to join a convivial party

party. I had watched his manner, but saw nothing in it which I could suppose was an innuendo, and as the gentlemen seemed in a sportive mood, I did not harbour the slightest suspicion that the fiend jealousy had taken possession of his breast; it is like a polished glass held to the lips when the life is in doubt—if there be the least breath it will catch the damp and shew it; it is surely the greatest of all evils, and yet the least pitied by those who occasion it; but the depraved and selfish soul of Lord Edgemount was not refined enough to harbour a sentiment which on most occasions proceeds from an ardent affection, and which lives on *doubts* and *suspicions*, created by a frenzy of passion, but as soon as these become certainties, then the passion either ceases

ceases or turns to absolute madness—No—under the mask of jealousy he had planned the most diabolical scheme invention could have thought of to rid himself of that being whose purity of mind rendered her an object of hatred, and occasioned him to practise those base and cunning arts of which a mind guilty as his own could have alone suspected the possibility; suspicion is ever the attendant of guilt, and confidence and serenity that of innocence; and it was the purity of our hearts which enabled us to conduct ourselves through the labyrinth of guilty plots, in which we found ourselves entangled.

I was shocked during dinner by the inde-

indelicacy of expressions which fell from my host and his noisy companions; and disgusted with their noisy attempts at wit, as soon as their gentle victim with politeness could retire she did so, and upon my rising from my seat to open the door for her ladyship to pass, her brutal husband exclaimed nothing could be so tiresome as to be interrupted in a good story whenever a lady chose to leave the room; as the other gentlemen agreed perfectly in that sentiment it was unnecessary for me to make any reply.

The dignity of a sensible and accomplished woman will keep under, in some degree, the most licentious and brutal; and immediately after her ladyship's departure, the men, who from the quantity

tity of madeira swallowed at dinner were already exhilarated, gave a loose to all the extravagance of the most nauseous and offensive conversation, which I was obliged to bear with until coffee was announced, which my lord ordered to have brought to them, but as my patience was quite exhausted, I retired to the drawing room, leaving my host and his companions to indulge themselves in the foul and depraved inclinations of noise and intoxication.

I was so rejoiced after my departure from that noisy company that joy appeared to throb in my veins, and courage to glow in my bosom, and I felt myself more than ever interested in the fate of Lady Edgemount, and would have risked every

every thing that could be relevent to extend to her felicity, or assuage those corroding reflections her unhappy fate must occasion. What a heart-rending reflection! that beauty and innocence is not only depressed, but it is made to pine in secret, languish in solitude, and, perhaps, expire unnoticed and unpitied, because a drunken and brutish man is insensible to its charms; should such a woman decay in the atmosphere of sorrow, or be trampled on by the rude power of vice—ought she not rather be guarded by delicacy and the fragrant blossoms of her mild virtues, made to dissiminate its odours and extend its fair germ by the cheering influence of connubial love. I never was an advocate for platonic love—it is of all other sentiments the most unsafe

unsafe to be encouraged in the breast of purity and honour, and has, I believe, occasioned *more* domestic uneasiness then can be expressed, since the married man or woman who encourages the idea is sure to find in the end how impossible it is to stop within the bounds of honour and morality, and, perhaps, even their characters made a theme of censure by others, who may be *less* innocent than themselves, but more knowing in the ways of mankind, will laugh at platonic love, and call it platonic nonsense; indeed it is an insidious pretension, and often betrays worthy minds into ruin; old age can only safely determine the barriers of platonic love; need we have a stronger proof of the danger of this pre-

pretension than this, that it is hardly ever thought off but by young people; yet without an idea of entertaining this dangerous guest, I found in my heart the affection of a brother for this lovely woman, who, had she been at liberty to receive my addresses with honour, I felt would have been, without exception, the choice of my heart's warmest affections; yet I determined, and I flatter myself never broke the promise made to myself, that neither by word or look would I betray to the object of my tenderness the sentiments her sufferings had I believe first inspired; indeed I found real love is the most exalted passion of the human soul, and fills with awe and reverence the heart of the man who boasts its impression

sion; it is not only in word and deed, but the least indelicacy of thought cannot mingle with it; but that passion which is generally dignified by the name of love, and which puts its votaries upon a thousand extravagancies, usually owes its being rather to ungoverned fancy than to solid judgment; yet the purest sentiments of love, honour, virtue, dignity, and courage, tempted me to protect and assuage, if possible, the anguish of a bursting heart, who had no friendly bosom near to repose her weight of sorrows.

On my entering the drawing-room Lady Edgemount was reading, but she with a politeness natural to her every action, laid aside her book, and proposed a game

game at piquet till the gentlemen joined us. I perceived she wished to a avoid any conversation respecting her lord, and admired the delicacy of conduct, which, however unworthy the man was, made her, if possible screen his vices from the observation of strangers, since while a woman continues to live under the protection of her husband, she cannot more effectually dishonour herself than by making his faults the subject of conversation, even to her nearest relatives, or most intimate friends, for if she would have the world respect her husband, she must set the example.

We continued to play till near twelve—a loud noise announced the approach of the dinner party—suffice it to say, that in the most indelicate manner Lord

Lord Edgemount dared to stigmatize my honour, and the virtue of his immaculate wife, whose innocence had so animated her that she appeared totally divested of fear, and the calumny by which she was assailed, in the presence too of witnesses so unlikely to judge of the pure intentions of another, owing to the depravity of their own hearts.

In the most unfeeling terms this brutish husband ordered her to leave his house, at the time observed, that he had no doubt but that the infant which she was was shortly to usher into life was the offspring of guilt, and that he had dispatched a messenger to her father in justication of his own conduct, and desiring to know

if he would sanction the conduct of his daughter in her shameless conduct.

Lady Edgemount, lovely in affliction, appeared to receive a gleam of satisfaction at the mention of her father, and mildly enquired if her lord would permit her to seek in her parent's protection that justice his cruel and unfounded suspicions had robbed her of, certain that a short time would convince him of her innocence; and that when it pleased heaven to make him a parent, she trusted his heart would recoil at the injustice of his conduct to her, and give, with the name, the feelings also of a father and a husband.

To all remonstrances he was deaf, and

as I saw it was a plan formed to destroy the fair fame of his angel wife, and that not in reality the slightest suspicion rested on his own mind of the crime he imputed to us, I resolved to bridle as much as possible the passion I felt at the shocking depravity of his conduct, judging it would be more prudent to make as little strife as possible, for the sake of the sweet sufferer, whose name, even in my opinion, ought not to be uttered by the breath of calumny, since the fame of a married woman is like a sheet of white paper, and can never wipe off a blot once received, however innocent she may be; there is indeed no sufficient court of judicature against the venom of slander, for though you punish the author

thor yet you cannot wipe away the calumny; and censure is an universal tax, which all persons of merit pay the public.

Lord Edgemount, glad to be rid of what he conceived a burden, ordered his travelling chaise, and his injured wife, attended by her woman, left his house never more to return to it, at least, during the life-time of the wretch who had thus unjustly banished her from it; and I immediately went to town, waiting in the utmost state of anxiety till I could learn how the lovely sufferer was received by her parents, who had she even been the guilty and unfortunate creature represented, was

yet entitled to their protection and support, since the marriage had been made by them when she was too young and unexperienced to have even a choice of her own, and in the alliance sought for their daughter, only the appendages of rank and fortune, without one thought of securing her the inexpressible blessings of domestic happiness; fortunate indeed would it have been had her family had the power when they presented her hand to have given her heart also, since affection might have softened the sorrows of her life, and knowing himself beloved, her lord might have become a different character.

Ardently as I wished to hear from herself in what manner Lady Edgemount

mount had been received by her father, I forbore to write to her, least a correspondence, however innocent, might be brought forward in confirmation of the criminal connection which it was alledged had subsisted against us; I, however, soon found that the mind of her father had been prejudiced against her; and that, notwithstanding she was allowed to remain under his roof till her confinement should be over, yet his mind, owing to the unequivocal assurances of his daughter's infidelity, was unconvinced. 'Great God!' thought I, 'and is it possible that a father who had been bred in the school of honour, and who had educated his child in the path of virtue, and taught her the pre-

cepts of the purest sentiments which can adorn the female character, can thus be carried away in a belief of the commission of a crime which circumstances the most heinous ought not to have provoked.

In about two months the newspapers announced to my eager eye that Lord Edgemount was the father of a daughter, and I pitied from my heart the infant cherub, who I supposed would be under the dominion of a wretch so unnatural as the parent who had given her existence, without the wish of making that life happy of which he was the origin; the natural ferocity of character which had marked his conduct respecting the lovely mother was evinced in respect to

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the child also, who was at the end of the month to be taken from the doating mother and given to the care of strangers, as it was impossible any machinations he could contrive could set aside the legality of birth of the infant heiress, who in spite of every alledged falsehood must succeed at his demise to his title and estates, the title being in the female line; and as *those never pardon* who *have done the* wrong, nothing could be more grating to the mind of this unfortunate man than a possibility of being represented by the child of one he had so deeply injured, who it was possible may be ornamental to a rank, which when possessed by those who have no personal merit to deserve

it, are at best but the royal stamp set upon base metal; but, thank God, though an honourable title may be conveyed to posterity, yet the *ignobling* qualities cannot be transferred, or never would I wish the daughter of my heart's adoption to boast of an ancestry which may render a good character more illustrious, but must make an ill one more contemptible; since rank must debase instead of heighten the person who knows not how to support it with dignity and honour; but, alas! the generality of mankind sink in virtue as they rise in fortune; and those who depend on their ancestry only does in a manner slight the very thing that gave him that quality, since it is only the virtue of his ancestors that first ennobled his blood; but

God

God never deserts those who have a firm reliance on him, and believes that a confidence in his mercy is the best foundation of all pleasures, and an entire dependence on him never leaves us without satisfaction in prosperity, or comfort in adversity; a convincing proof that it is of the last importance to season the passions of a child with devotion, which seldom dies in a mind that has received an early tincture of it, though it may seem extinguished for a while by the cares of the world, the heats of youth, or the allurements of vice; it generally breaks out and discovers itself again as soon as discretion, consideration, age, or misfortune have brought us to a proper idea of ourselves—the fire may be cover-

ed and over-laid, but cannot be entirely quenched and smothered. By this divine support, my still adored wife was enabled to surmount all the oppressions heaped upon her; and before the time appointed for snatching from her maternal bosom the child on whom she fondly doated, Lord Edgemount was suddenly and awfully called to answer, before the God he had offended, those crimes which, perhaps, originated in a too ardent passion for *every vice* which the world tolerates and sanctions by the soft appellation of fashionable manners, and a thirst after dissipation; suffice it to say he fell in a duel with one of his profligate and gay companions, occasioned by a quarrel commenced at the gaming table, to which his life became the

the sacrifice, and my inestimable wife was once more at liberty to chuse happiness in a manner more conducive to the simple purity of her soul.

The child was made a ward in chancery; and after the most minute investigation respecting the conduct of its angel mother, the person committed to her care, who after a proper time given to the forms of the world in mourning for a bad husband, gave herself to the arms of one who can never sufficiently praise the Almighty for the blessings he has received in such a companion, who in adversity has proved the strength of affection a life of prosperity never could have evinced, and I

felt that my life ought to be dedicated solely to endeavour to restore to her that peace of which she had been so shamefully robbed; the bloom when she became mine, had faded on her cheek but the warm breath of love soon revived it, and gave additional enchantment from the mild lustre of her eyes, as she gazed on her happy husband and the sweet child, who has since that fortunate period been equally the treasure of both our hearts; Providence has given us no children to divide with our Erin the heart of her parents.

On her marriage with me, my wife renounced an empty title and condescended to take the name of her doating husband, a name which even those who from

from political prejudices may in one respect be its enemies, can in no instance of life be coupled with dishonour; for in troubled water you can scarce see your face or see it very little until the water be quiet and still, so in troubled times you can see little truth, when times are quiet and settled, *then, and then only,* truth appears; a soft current is soon stopped, but a strong stream resisted, breaks upon many, or overwhelms all.

After my union with her I found myself in Elysium, and while her soul, which on every occasion stood trembling in her eye, expressed the most ineffable sweetness, my ravished senses in transport for a moment seemed to have lost their

their energy; and even in the midst of danger, which the rebellion heaped upon me, she appeared anxious for my safety; I listened to the mellifluous voice that told me how fondly I was beloved, and as I listened, forgot that I was termed a *rebel*, and *was* in *sad* reality a prisoner, instead of which I believed myself in possession of the universe.

The moments of happiness flew with rapid wings after the persecuted Lady Edgemount became my own, and shared with me the dear delights of a happy home; her lovely infant was only thought of so far as the regular stipends were paid for her maintenance to those who had they possessed but the smallest stipend would have shared it with

with the object of their fondest hopes, but the infant must one day be of importance if she lived, and every arrangement was made by the chancellor for her infantine establishment, who wisely judged a mother's care would be the most proper to watch her childish years.

Before our Erin had completed her fourth year, the long-threatened storm broke over our devoted country; to you, my dear Portland, who have buffeted it in all its fury, I need not say it was as if you had beheld the radiance of the morn, when creeping upon the frowning night, suddenly obscured by dark and threatening clouds, and the lustre of fair Aurora eclipsed by the unruly

unruly elements; as you have seen old ocean lie unruffled and smooth as a mirror to the bounding sky, quickly agitated by the boisterous winds, and the calm changed into the raging hurricane; or as you have seen a rainbow in all its gaudy colours, and with the brilliancy of more than ten thousand dies, illumine the horizon of the declining day, while its effulgence warmed you into admiration, imperceptibly vanish, and leave you to lament that its rays were so transitory; such was the cloud that deadened the prospect of my hopes; such was the suddenness of the storm which succeeded the calm, that it began to give joy to the gentle spirits of my persecuted wife, who had to mourn the loss of her misguided father, shortly after he was fully convinced

convinced of the purity of his angel child ; such was the momentary joy of those chaste raptures which, to use an idea of Rousseau's, would have been worth an eternity had they lasted a specified time ; but to see a woman so amiable, so lovely, visiting me in a loathsome dungeon, was incompatible with the feelings and dignity of a man. I before, my friend, told you that it was owing to the indefatigable cleverness of this affectionate wife my liberty was secured, and to the same exertions I am now indebted for a full pardon of all the faults alledged against me. As her lovely girl, who even at this moment conceives me her father, and has no idea of the rank in life she is born to fill, is now bursting into woman-hood, she conceives it

it to be the duty of a mother to restore her to a world she is by every attainment of mind and person born to ornament, for though brought up in retirement you will, I flatter myself, join with me in thinking she is by nature formed to ornament a court : and I have the pleasure of thinking that in the simplicity with which our humble Erin has been raised, the young and blooming Countess of Edgemount will not have lost any one grace or virtue which can adorn a high situation.

When chance, my dear friend, first introduced us to each other, I did not at once chuse to confide our real situation to you, lest by some unforeseen event our darling child should have been

been taken from us by the power of the English law, as we made her the companion of our flight, without permission of the court of chancery to do so, but by the intercession of friends, that step, as well as my other follies, has been pardoned, and we are now ordered to conduct the youthful heiress to take possession of the rank and fortune to which her birth entitles her; the fortune is now immense, owing to the long minority; and will you, my friend, give me credit for being most sincere in speaking the wishes of her mother and myself when we say that to see our beloved child united to the son of a man we so highly esteem is now the first wish of our hearts; deem us not romantic in

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the idea; have we not in the retirement of a distant country learned to estimate each other's characters, and have you not, unconscious of her true situation, often wished the event of which I now speak, would one day take place? I know rank and fortune would of themselves have little weight with you, but if you loved your little simple wild American, surely you cannot banish from your heart the Countess of Edgemount, equally amiable, young, and lovely, but at the same time richly gifted with all the blessings fortune can bestow."

Need I add more, my dearest Mary, to convince you that the hands which will convey this packet to you are worthy of your regard; they assure me no-

nothing will satisfy them till they can introduce your daughter elect, as they kindly term her, to one who, without knowing, they are prepared to love. The sweet Erin too, with a naivette which characterizes her every word and action, often talks of the pleasure she shall experience in cultivating a friendship with Rossanna and her brother. Surely, my dearest Mary, God, in his infinite wisdom orders every thing for our advantage, since I cannot but flatter myself that the splendid alliance now held out to our son may one day take place, then, indeed, shall I rejoice in the persecution which drove me an exile to the the shores of America, since by my errors my amiable boy may become the happy husband of the most lovely creature

creature in existence, who it is totally impossible any heart of sensibility can behold with indifference.

These amiable friends quit our peaceful solitude in a few days; to them I refer my beloved for every particular of him who exists only in a state of banishment from all Providence has left him to chear the few remaining years of life; that we may pass those it is the divine will yet to ordain for us, in the calm delights of domestic life, and to behold our amiable children happily settled with those worthy to share the fondest affections of their hearts is the constant prayer of my soul; join me, my best beloved, in these my orisons, and surely we shall once more be restored in this

life to each other, for the prayers of piety and virtue like yours have never yet been offered in vain.

Adieu, my Mary, may your next letter continue to breathe the hope of a speedy re-union to my soul, for surely an absence such as I have endured is in itself a sufficient punishment for my crime, however heinous it may be considered.

LETTER

LETTER X.

Lady Cecelia Darcey to the Marchioness of Desmond.

WILL not my darling sister behold with an emotion of astonishment a long letter from her Cecelia, when only a few streets now separate us from each other? yet how does my heart bleed at the change a few short months has made

made; when I consider, easy as our access is to each other, days pass over without our having an opportunity of embracing the beloved of our hearts. Forgive the observation; we were once a family of harmony and love—why are we not still so?—surely it is impossible you can be less sensible of the blessing we enjoy in the most tender and affectionate of mothers, whose only happiness is centered in her children. Oh, my sweetest Olivia, why is it that you prefer every society to the circle of partial friends, who are bound to you by the tenderest, closest ties of nature? I trust you are not yet arrived to that height of modish refinement which banishes from the heart all natural affection, and la-

vishes on the artful and unworthy the purest sweetest sensations of the human heart! Return, my love, ere it be too late to the maternal arms of the most tender of mothers, who pines to fold to her breast her darling child, *such as she was* when she resigned her to the protection of a husband.

Oh, my beloved sister, my friend, beware from a thoughtless, shall I say levity of disposition, of following a multitude to do evil, let that giddy multitude be ever so distinguished for rank or fortune; whatever inclination you may at present have to enter into the pernicious dissipation of the world, yet let the voice of true affection warn you as you value your own happiness,

your

your husband's affection, nay even your reputation in life; let me warn you to fly the fatal temptation of bad example—of pretended friends, whom in reality I fear to be secret enemies, who are laying snares for your ruin, or much I fear you will too soon be reconciled to it; there is a kind of magic in it—it infatuates; the habit once acquired is never by any consideration to be conquered—I tremble my sister for your danger—for many women truly virtuous lose their reputation by not attending sufficiently to those appearances which their own innocence leads them to esteem indifferent, but which the severity of censure will construe into criminal; and when an amiable

young woman, who has, perhaps, conceived a too high opinion of her own understanding and prudence, falls into the hands of a deceitful person, they are in the most imminent danger, since they will meet a flatterer who will magnify their supposed wisdom in order to take advantage of their folly. The true amiability of a woman's character is contained in domestic life; and she is to be praised or blamed according as she fills the duties of a daughter, wife, and mother; those, well performed, a parent's heart must rejoice in such a child; but where there is a want of duty to those who gave us being, all other qualities are to be suspected; neither in the decline of life can we reasonably expect com-

comfort from our children if we have neglected to administer to the happiness of those who were the tender protectors of our infant years; the recompense a child owes is a debt which can never be cancelled by any possibility, since it is every day encreasing both in principle and interest. Think not, my love, I suppose your heart less warm to us than before your marriage, by thus reminding you of our claims on it, on the contrary, I am convinced it is only for the moment your senses are taken captive by the persons who now stile themselves your friends, and that you will again return to the fond arms of a family who have ever considered you as its pride and ornament.

You cannot conceive, my lovely and beloved sister, how the anxiety of our mother is raised on your account; who trembles lest her Olivia should actually have taken upon her the despicable character of a modern fine lady; for after the example she has shown, you or I could have no excuse; let us beware, my love; fatally powerful is the influence of fashion and bad examples; but above all things guard against any intimacy with those whose characters will not bear the most minute investigation, however specious their manners and professions, but whose conscience is the rudder by which they seem to steer, while they turn it as the wind blows for their own advantage, while they are the more dangerous from possessing a manner

manner which renders them the most fascinating in society, by dealing out anecdotes, of which they have a mint always ready to coin, such as may be current and seasonable to their own ends; the road to the heart of innocence is very plain, and they who from any base motive wish to gain possession of it, may easily get it; but, however, for a time, the blandishments of flattery may succeed, the hour will arrive when it can no longer conceal itself, and the designing character whose first attempt is to gain entire dominion, and to seclude all who would interfere with its plans, will be certainly disappointed; while they who make the doing their duty with honour and credit their earnest endeavour, be their station what it

may, applause will be the consequence, and will be as lasting as its foundation is solid.

Forgive my candour, but I dislike your present associates, and our mother dreads them for her child—pity our anxiety for your fame and happiness, with which our own is so intimately connected; and tell us as you will, in the whirlwind of fashion to which you are exposed, dare to be prudently singular; your health too must suffer from the life you lead; can you bear to sacrifice that, and with it your beauty, for amusements as they are called, which have already been prejudicial to your bloom?

Your

Your lord has this morning called on us to request that we would use our influence to prevent your going this evening to the Duchess of G——'s masquerade, as he said, with a half-suppressed sigh, his own was not sufficient to induce you to pass one evening at home, notwithstanding he had made it his most earnest request you would so far oblige him. My dear mother shook her head, and while a tear glistened in her mild eye, which beamed with paternal anxiety, she replied, she was sorry to observe his too great indulgence of her Olivia had rendered her for the present careless of the admonitions of those who truly, fondly, loved her; while her actions were guided by

those characters, who from their own situations in life found it convenient to flatter all the follies of a young mind, almost intoxicated by indulgence, and the uncontrouled dominion of themselves.

Oh, my Olivia, let not your mother have reason to accuse you of inattention to the mild precepts of propriety she would hold up to your imitation, or your amiable, indulgent lord, doubt for a moment the influence his wishes should on all occasions have on the actions of his wife; and must he not doubt your affections for him when he sees you sacrifice those charms he holds so dear to a constant round of frivolous insipid amusements?—when he finds you prefer the

the company of the most insignificant coquets and coxcombs to his—must it not wound his pride?—no mortal is free from some share of that; his indeed is, I dare answer for it, of the most laudable kind—must he not in his moments of reflection, despise your taste; and may he not in the end —ah! 'tis too much to be feared!—come to have a contempt for yourself? love is a passion which cannot long subsist without a mutual return; in its early passion it lessens every fault, in its declension it not only aggravates but multiplies them; and it is never so violent but one unexpected action may turn it to hate; beware, my darling sister, lest you give his lordship room to suspect a want of affection; and is it

possible you should?—is he not the most amiable of men?—has he not loaded you with obligations?—what says gratitude?—we will suppose his marrying you was doing no more than justice to your rank and charms; we will suppose love prompted him to make himself master of an object who was so necessary to his happiness; in this respect we will suppose he conferred no more than he received, but has he not since shewn a thousand disinterested proofs of his noble generosity; reflect, my love, for one moment, in the retirement of your closet, and you will be again the joy of our hearts, the enlivener of our domestic circle, which, without your presence, is sadly incomplete; then I shall again embrace the

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innocent, artless, affectionate, Olivia, instead of the gay, the frivolous Marchioness of Desmond.

I know you are possessed of just and noble sentiments, listen to their dictates, and act up to them. Do you know since I came to town I have been in a state of constant astonishment how you support the fatigue—how you can endure with common patience the insipid round of dissipation in which you are engaged; I do not wonder you should have given into it at first; it had then novelty perhaps to recommend it.

Be not displeased at the freedom

of my remarks; and let me conjure you to restore me to your confidence; tell me, as formerly, even your faults and levities, for, believe me, not even your partial self can be more indulgent to them than your Cecilia; though from the dictates of the purest friendship, you must expect my censure in whatever appears to me blameable in your sentiments and conduct.

Let us embrace our own Olivia this evening; and let us, in the dear circle of family harmony, congratulate each other on an addition of happiness we are shortly to encrease by a connection with a being we are already united to by the chords of affection and esteem;—do not start!—but Avenmore will

shortly

shortly present you a sister, unadorned by rank and riches, but richly, most richly endowed by virtue, youth, and beauty, but, thank God, totally unlike the present race of fine ladies; one in a family is enough in all conscience! pardon, my love, the observation; but if you will be good, and return to your former self, when I recognize my lovely, unaffected, amiable sister, the fine lady will be banished from my remembrance, and I will dwell with transport on the virtues of my two sisters, who are alike lovely and amiable. Surely you must by this time have made the discovery, that the fascinating Rossanna is to be the future Countess of Avenmore; my dear mother has this morning sanctioned by her approbation the wishes

wishes of her son ; and has already embraced as her daughter, the gentle, timid, happy girl, who, in my opinion, would do honour to a throne.

Once more, my sister, let me request to see you in Grosvenor-square to-night; and for heaven's sake let us embrace our Olivia, and her lord, unaccompanied by that odious Lady Berresford, by whose character I am disgusted, though her manners are certainly most captivating in society ; what a pity such talents are not the accompaniments of virtues as brilliant ; then, indeed, would she be a safe and proper companion for the young and guileless of her own sex.

Adieu, dearest sister ; to-night I know you

you will not refuse to steal from dissipation to pass in the bosom of a family, to every individual of which you are more dear than words can express; in the name of all I add, and subscribe myself,

Your's, as much as my own,

CECILIA DARCEY.

Grosvenor-Square.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

Lady Berresford to Colonel Fortescue.

FORTESCUE, I am absolutely ruined unless you send me five hundred pounds instantly; my necessities are of that nature that they will admit of no delay, and, therefore, I must tell you, that no apology your ingenuity can invent will be received; I well know all the

the arguments you can advance, such as the delay of agents, the impossibility of over-drawing your banker, the having lent a large sum to a *friend* but a few days since, or the having lost a sum to an *enemy* last night at the club; but I tell you once more, all these circumstances *combined* would not have one moment's weight with me—the money I want, and the money I must have, before ten o'clock this evening; at which hour I am to meet Lady Desmond, at that most convenient and delightful temple of pleasure, the Argyle-street room; you know my promises are pledged to be your friend in *that quarter*, but you *also* know on what terms, and treaties *once* broken by either party, it is by all the cabinets in Europe

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rendered null and void for ever; besides your *personal* obligations to me, the claim I hold on your purse is great, and I can only admire *my prudence and descretion*, when I think of the trifling sum I have now condescended to ask of you, instead of that which my indefatigable exertions in your favour *justly* entitle me to receive. You well know my conscience is not more delicate than that of others in my situation, yet, you may believe me, when I declare, that in the whole course of my life, I never before felt the same degree of compunction for attempting to disturb the domestic happiness of any family so sincerely as I do in the present instance, but the fact is, that my various calls for money

money had rendered my situation so unpleasant that necessity obliged me to seize on the glorious opportunity the partiality of the lovely marchioness gave me, of making *her person responsible for my debts;* you well know my old lord and master has *already* opened, on desperate occasions his purse-strings, to save me from ruin; it is impossible I can go to that bank again, as I have drained it *almost* to bankruptcy;—what then was I to do? fortunately for me, my good genius, in the shape of the Marquis of Desmond, came across me, and having been an old friend of my family, he renewed his acquaintance with me, and having been on an embassy to the court of Vienna at the time the

public

public thought proper to take some liberties with my name; he was totally unconscious of the influence he must possess to introduce me once more into that circle in which he had left me, when in the height of my power (which, indeed, I must say, or it would be injustice to my own abilities) I retained, by a most happy knack of turning *every body* I knew into ridicule; a talent, however brilliant, and to the majority of the world attractive, is to many highly injurious, since every body, however pleased they may be at the momentary expence of their friends, at length, suppose the same degree of abilities may in time be exercised at their own expence; yet I even endeavoured to season it in such a way as to make the failings

failings of those to whom I addressed myself of so little consequence that the person to whom I spoke may be merry on the subject *most analogous* to himself; such has been my maxim; since raillery, to make it palatable, should be a decent mixture of praise and reproach; and I always endeavour to mention the faults of men in such a way as if I loved them; since I have, from my first entrance into life, observed that a person acknowledged as a wit, though for a time received well, in the end exposed, in most sober families, to hatred and contempt; indeed, would my circumstances allow of honesty, I, myself, would confess that wit is of the nature of fine salt, which preserves and keeps

sweet

sweet the good and sound parts of all bodies, and only frets, dries up, and destroys those humours which putrify and corrupt; yet in my travels through life, which I assure you, however you may laugh, have generally paid the expence, I have discovered that satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders discover every body's face but their own; on this account I have practised every sort of amiable quality to gratify my known turn for wit, which has opened the doors of an hundred houses to me, from which I should have been banished, without having been known to possess the happy knack of making people merry at the expence of their friends—a talent the worst enemy I ever *deserved*, and

and, between ourselves, I ought to have some of that description never disputed; however, all this is nothing to you; and I well know nothiug is so tiresome as sentiment to those whose minds are occupied with far weightier concerns—all I wish to impress on you are the claims I have on your purse, for the immense favour I have done you by taking the trouble to use my best exertions to bring to your net the fish for which you are so industriously angling; and that your obligations may not *escape your memory* I will just mention the situation of the family at the time I was introduced to the acquaintance of the lovely unsuspecting Marchioness, and what it is at the present moment of my writing:—The first even-

ing I was presented to her was at a ball given by the Marquis of D——, it was the evening of her presentation at court; the master of the house a batchelor, and a near relation of her lord's; her ladyship the acknowledged queen of the fête—and certainly a more interesting lovely creature never met my eye; she was gentle, soft, condescending, yet, at the same time, supported herself with a dignity and composure, which fascinated every heart at the moment her uncommon vivacity and the sweet simplicity of her intelligent face captivated the beholder, and gave to the fair bride a pre-eminence over every female in the room. The men were loud in their applause, the women wondered that a young creature, born to her rank in society, should be so unlike them-

themselves; for my part, I was very intent on a rubber of five guineas cassino, which I could very ill have afforded to lose, when Lord Desmond brought up this very creature to me, and mentioned me as an old and *valuable* friend; you may suppose I was not behind his lordship in part of memory, and was most kindly invited to dine in Portland Place, the next day—to me a most seasonable invitation, since I had nearly tired all my friends, by long visits at their mansions, it not being so convenient for me to return to my own.

On my entering the drawing-room in Portman-square, I found the lovely mistress surrounded with every luxury her

rank could entitle her to, at the same time, from her elegant yet simple manners I could have almost supposed her the gentle heroine of Prior's Emma. She welcomed me with a warmth of affection, as the friend of her lord, and in the gentlest, sweetest accents, entreated my friendship, an honour, she said, to which she had no claim but through him who had been the foundations of all her happiness.

During the day she conducted herself with such sweet propriety, such graceful simplicity, that I could not have supposed a young creature born in the rank of life she was could have imbibed; indeed, I am sure no modern governess had the care of her education We had

a

a large party to dinner; and when the ladies went to the drawing-room, I took pains to ascertain the profoundity of the principles instilled into it, since her own innocence, and the good-humoured weakness of her husband, I began to think might in time make some emolument of this lovely woman, who only required to be seen to be admired, beyond any creature who had appeared for many years.

During my researches on her mind, I found no penetration was wanting to discover that she was a creature devoted to her God, her family, and her friends; when speaking of her mother, the Dowager Lady Avenmore, she was absolutely

enthusiastic; and I was not long in determining that whenever my power commenced, and commence from the first moment I was determined it should, that of her family must cease, or I should be only secondary in the citadel, where my interest would require me to be the sole commander; fortunately for my plans, my persuasive manners and knowledge of the world soon gave me an ascendancy over her innocent unadulterated mind; and before I had enjoyed the *entree* of the house six weeks I had the pleasure to observe my precepts had not been thrown away on a scholar not able to improve by them.

My first step was to hint, in the most delicate manner, at the ridiculous figure

a young woman made in society who was singular for piety, and all the nonsensical virtues of domestic life; such as being a dutiful and affectionate daughter, and obedient fond wife, &c. &c. exemplifying my sophistical arguments, by pointing out to her observation some of our most dashing females, who, while they occupy the first rank in society, set at defiance all the vulgar prejudices of old fashioned education.

The lovely marchioness had been reared in the very hot-bed of fanatic enthusiasm; her mother, the dowager Lady Avenmore, is a perfect devotee; and till her marriage, I suppose, she never missed morning and evening prayers in her life;

and in many instances I have found that turn for devotion inculcated in the mind of a child more troublesome to my plans than any thing besides, since the mind once seasoned with devotion it seldom dies in a mind that has received an early tincture of it, though it may seem extinguished for a while by the world, the heats of youth, and the allurements of pleasure, it generally breaks out and discovers itself again as soon as discretion, consideration, age, or misfortune brings it back to its first impressions—the fire may be covered and over-laid, but cannot be entirely quenched and smothered; yet though I blamed a too pious zeal, observe I did not object to the performance of religious duties, on the contrary, I talked a vast deal in her own stile, and by flatter-

flattering her understanding, of which indeed she possesses as good a share as most girls of seventeen, I by degrees brought her to believe mine was superior to that of any other person she knew; for on all occasions I have found the heart has no avenue so open as that of flattery, which like some enchantment lays all its guards asleep, so powerful is it in its effects, that I have seen many receive with pleasure the praises of those whose opinion they would not take in any thing but their own favour. This is my universal method of pleasing, and I believe you know how well in most instances I have succeeded; and to you, from whom I have no reserve, I frankly aver that I am more anxious to gain a reputation for

wit and sense than for honesty and virtue; but to proceed in the recital of my ingenious manœuvres, in order to convince you how much you are my debtor, for all the trouble I have taken to further your plans; I so far succeed in my attempts to make my little novice less devout—that on a Sunday she was content to go once instead of twice in the day to public worship; this was gaining ground fast, for she is not a little positive, indeed I think her only fault is that of being too much wedded to her own opinion, and too decided for so young a creature; but no wonder, taken absolutely from the nursery and from the wing of an excellent mother for even I must allow Lady Avenmore that merit, and suddenly placed at the head of a splendid establishment, with

out

out controul in any one point of life, admired, coveted, followed by the world, and absolutely idolized by the Marquis, who lives only as his fair wife condescends to smile; who is there that would not feel self-sufficient under circumstances so trying. Her lord is the best creature in existence; generous, friendly, and honourable; yet vanity is his fault, and to have his wife admired his ambition; and he has not discrimination to discover that great beauty and constant admiration are like a high wind, and a great gale, which often sink the vessel, unless it has on board a skilful pilot to direct its course; he is as fond of my society as his wife, indeed, whoever she honours with her favor is sure to possess

his also. When I was first introduced to her she was so timid, so cautious, that she would not stir from the wing of her lord; but this family compact I soon so far, by dint of raillery, broke into, that in a fortnight after my first introduction, I prevailed on her to take the arm of any pretty fellow that offered it in preference to that of her lord; and by the time you came to town, and renewed your former intimacy with him, she had ceased to blush at a compliment offered to her charms by any other man but Lord Desmond, and had gained that air of confidence in herself which she now possesses, and which I think she considers are more becoming her rank and the high situation she bears in society, than the soft unassuming

ing manners which are her natural adornments.

I congratulated myself about three months after my having been on terms of what *we* call friendship with each other, that the church going scheme was at an end, and instead of such dull business, she used to call on me to go with her to the park; but one morning, about three o'clock, I walked to Portland-Place, and found her preparing to go to church; I confess I was rather surprised, but was too guarded to suffer my astonishment or disaffection to appear; on the contrary, I offered to attend her, well knowing that by thus falling into her whims I should the more effectually ingratiate myself; the day was clear and frosty; and as the distance

distance was short, her whimsical little ladyship chose to walk; during the way I made a discovery that did not give me much hopes of long retaining the first place in her confidence, since with joy sparkling in her intelligent face, she mentioned that a few days would unite her once more to her beloved mother and sister, as the letters she had the day before received announced their speedy arrival, and she dwelt with delight on the happy meeting she expected; in short, I soon found from her manner that her ladyship resembled a spoiled child, tired and disgusted with having its own way, and found it necessary even for its own amusement, to be under some controul, but I was determined to endeavour

deavour to damp this ardour of fili love, being well aware that the reign of any one person will be short in the mind of a gay young woman, who admits friends and relations to cabal, particularly where a number from envy, and malice, envied the influence I enjoyed; and I found how much I had in a short time gained in society from having acquired the appellation of Lady Desmond's friend; at the time I was introduced to her every door was shut against me, and my trades people, ungrateful wretches as they are, did not chuse even to give me credit for a cap, till by a happy contrivance of having my cards dropped with her's, wherever she visited; those who did know me became polite, and those to whom

whom, *through her means*, I gained an *introduction, kind*; and as to my dirty tradesmen, I made them my most obsequious servants, and on condition of having all I wanted on my own terms, I promised to introduce them to my particular friend, the beautiful marchioness, a bait which instantly took, for she squanders money without considering the vast sums she expends, and never thinks of any thing but wearing the most elegant and expensive things of every kind which can be purchased; such a woman is so great an acquisition to milliners and mantua-makers, that on her credit I could have been dressed almost as well as her ladyship, had not her generosity rendered my running bills unnecessary, since nothing

thing has come out, however expensive, but I am requested to accept it; can you suppose I would be fool enough to allow any person whatever to have the slightest controul over such a character but myself?—No, I will not, if it be in my power to prevent it, resemble the discarded favourite of a prince, who like a dial is no longer looked at when the sun of favour is off:—No, as I have once gained a footing, and it shall not be my fault if I do not keep entire possession, to the exclusion of every body, nay, even yourself, if you do not bribe high to secure a corner in the heart of my giddy little friend, who from every thing romantic and proper has become as much the reverse as I could have expected in

so short a time. I laughed at the idea of mama being angry, as I found the church going scheme was prior to her arrival, the old lady being an absolute methodist, and her ladyship still conceiving herself in a degree under the controul of dear dear mama, as she termed her; declaring how happy she should be to introduce me to her, and her sweet Cecilia, who I did not much fear, supposing her just such a novice in the manner of the world as the pretty marchioness herself.

After a good deal of ralliery, well pointed, about any body having influence when a woman was married, not even excepting a husband, who I contended should be the most passive creature in existence

existence to a being so lovely as herself, I dropped the subject of family attachment, which I saw had its effect on the mind of my little pupil, who, I need not mention to you, gives herself as much credit for every knowledge of the world, as if she was forty years old, and had lived that time amongst those persons who compose the circles of high life.

I dined in Portland-Place the evening the Avenmores arrived; the marchioness insisted I should go with her to Grosvenor-square, and I was accordingly introduced to this very, as the world term it, amiable family, but they are far too full of propriety for me; and in my heart

I wish they had not left their old castle, till time and opportunity had a little repaid our plans. Lady Desmond with all the warmth of her character, presented me as her most chosen friend; but I could observe, notwithstanding I did every thing I could to make myself *charming in their own way*, that I was observed with an air of scrutiny; nor did the fond mother, for fond I am sure she is, of her darling Olivia, seem to approve much of the visible change in her modernised daughter. You have not yet, I believe, seen Lady Cecilia; I bid you beware of your heart, as I think she will even rival her beauteous sister; there is also a sweet little Irish girl of their family, who, if I mistake not, has made great

great havoc in the heart of the young earl, and as he is completely his own master, I think he will shortly quarter the rose and thistle. I am certain true love cannot be disguised; since then there is but one genuine kind, though a thousand copies of it, the passion which is generally known by that name, puts its votaries upon a thousand extravagancies, it being rather the effects of ungoverned fancy than solid judgment, and I think his lordship shews but a poor proof of the latter ingredient, if he gives his hand to the daughter of an Irish exile.

However, I shall not attempt to meddle with their affairs; so long as they

they leave me the undisturbed possession of Lady Desmond, they may amuse themselves in their own humdrum manner, and welcome, for me; and pray and preach all day long, so that neither myself or my fascinating friend is obliged to be of their stupid parties. But to proceed with my own history, and a melancholy one it is at the present moment—I lost last night a large sum—so large a one I will not mention particulars; all I shall say if you do not enclose me what I ask, you and I must break, before I enter farther into your views.

Consider this, and let me hear from you by the return of my servant, in

the way I wish, if you hope to reap any advantage from the exertions of her as you deserve,

E. BERRESFORD.

END OF VOL. II.

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